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*F. W. Litch - Lawrence*

THE AUTHOR IN 1940

# FATE HAS BEEN KIND

*by*

THE RT. HON.

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE, P.C.

*Secretary for India and Burma*

THE NATIONAL BOOK ASSOCIATION  
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TO  
MY WIFE  
BY WHOSE CONSTANT INSPIRATION  
MY LIFE HAS BEEN ENRICHED

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## Prelace

THREE major wars affecting this country have occurred during my lifetime. My reactions towards them, as will be seen from the pages of this book, have been widely different. The Boer War was, in my opinion, a crime and a blunder, a crime because in spite of some provocation it was almost pure imperialist aggression, a blunder because it raised up against us in South Africa opposition from a major part of the white inhabitants, which remains to this day. I am convinced that the British elements in that country would have been far stronger at the present time if it had never taken place.

The war of 1914-18 arose in my view out of a clash of rival ambitions, and I place responsibility for the immediate outbreak primarily on the shoulders of two weak men—the Kaiser of Germany and the Czar of Russia. I should have liked to see our own country remain outside the struggle and in a position to intervene at the appropriate time to arbitrate between the combatants. But granted the alignment of European politics which preceded it, and granted the invasion of Belgium by the German armies, this was probably impossible. I believed, however, that, even after our entry, there came a time when a settlement could have been negotiated, which would have safeguarded every British interest and preserved the peace of the world for as far into the future as human foresight could reach. Whether I was right or wrong can only be a matter of conjecture, but I ask those who take a contrary view not to be misled, by the adage that 'history repeats itself' into thinking that the Kaiser was the prototype of Hitler, or that the Constitution of Germany in 1914-18 was at all comparable with that of 1939. Such a view is no more true than that the Russia of the Czar was the same as the heroic Soviet Union of today.

When the war was in fact brought to an end by the defeat of Germany, I took the view that the revolutionary elements in that country, which had dethroned the Kaiser, should have been supported in their efforts to establish a viable republic and to keep the military elements in Germany in subjection. I was opposed, therefore, to the continuance of the hunger blockade after the Armistice\*. I was opposed also to the terms of peace which placed large numbers of Germans beyond the frontiers of the Reich, fixed the indemnity at an impossible figure, and constrained the German Government to sign, under duress, an admission of sole responsibility for the war.

I further opposed the way the treaty was administered. I thought it

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\* This view was also taken by Mr. Winston Churchill.

seeking a clearer understanding of the past, in order to take their stand with regard to the future To all those who have helped me in my task I tender my grateful thanks To my wife whose vision has led me on to my secretaries Miss Knowles and Miss Groom who have assisted my labours with their advice and technical skill to my friends, Evelyn Sharp and Cuthbert and Kathleen Wilkinson who have corrected typescript and proofs to these and to many others I acknowledge my indebtedness Without their kindly encouragement and help the work could not have been accomplished

F W PETHICK LAWRENCE

*Lincoln's Inn*  
*December 1942*

## A SONG OF SPRING\*

I saw the snowdrops, stars of winter's night,  
And asked who gave them courage to upraise  
Their shapely heads, and hide them not in fright  
At cold and biting winds in earth's dark days  
They answered "She who gave us life's delight  
Enjoined on us to gladden all your ways  
For love of her we smile in frost's despite"

Next crocuses appeared in fairy ring,  
Purple for winter's pall, white for the cold  
Moon's beams, gold for the sunny dawn of Spring  
I clapped my hands for joy But they made bold  
To mock me with my love's prolonged delay  
And laughing, bade me read in books of old  
Of April's sun and woman's fickle way

Then all along the hedge a line of flame  
Shot out, and Mother Earth's Green Lady cried  
"My children greet you, daffodils their name  
They wish to be your playmates, at your side  
Disporting As ye all obey the same  
Dear mistress, they refuse to be denied  
So, brother, come and join their happy game"

At Easter I will to the wood repair,  
And feast mine eyes on bluebells, for I know  
That all the azure of the sky is there,  
And they'll on me a benison bestow  
From my dear love, fulfilling her sweet prayer,  
That in my labours I may ever go  
From strength to strength, serene, devoid of care

In May the tulips round the pond will cry  
Where is our mistress? All the winter's night  
Have we bedecked ourselves that we might vie  
In flaunting gorgeous blooms before her sight  
In vain?" "Grieve not, dear flowers" I will reply,  
"To other lands her presence brings delight,  
For we have cast her out—just as we did!"

But to the wild wild rose, the rose of June,  
Mine own full song of ecstasy I'll sing  
"Thy heavenly colours draw from sun and moon,  
From love's sweet breath thy honeyed fragrance bring  
Weave texture from th' ethereal air at noon,  
Transcend in loveliness all flowers of Spring  
For my dear love comes home to me in June"

F W PETHICK-LAWRENCE

\* This poem, describing the flowers in the garden at Fourways, was written for my wife in the spring of 1930, when she was away on a visit to South Africa



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learning the multiplication table, and before I reached my teens I diverted myself in bed by extending it beyond the orthodox twelve times twelve, up to nineteen times nineteen. But sometimes I cried myself to sleep *puzzling over infinity*. That God should continue for infinite time in the future seemed to me just thinkable, but that He had existed as I was told, from infinity in the past baffled me so hopelessly as to make me miserable. Suppose, instead, there had been a definite date of beginning! And behind that, what? There was clearly no escape that way. So I learnt in mute despair my first lesson in the limitation of my finite mind.

Reading presented no special difficulties to me, but I never got from it the delight which it brings to some children, who find in a book an entry into an enchanted world. This was partly due to the fact that I suffer from a very slight astigmatism, so that small print generally gave me a headache, and this continued until in adult life a doctor advised me to wear glasses, of course, 70 years ago no one thought children should have them—it made them look so odd! My superabundant energy also made it very difficult for me to sit still, and I was frankly bored with most of the books I was given to read.

Writing was a painful process, because in those days it was considered essential to slope all the letters downwards from right to left. As my hand refused to describe characters in this way naturally, a wooden instrument was affixed to it to constrain it into the correct position. I always thought of this piece of mechanism as 'the torture'. But it was successful to the extent of enabling me to produce an untidy and irregular script on orthodox lines. It was not until I was fourteen or fifteen that a master at Eton suggested that I should try an upright style like that of my tutor's. I took his advice with alacrity, and in gaining freedom achieved for the first time a writing character of my own.

Languages I never succeeded in learning though I tried hard. I remember once, when in the 'prep' hour I was doing what was called Latin prose, I looked at my watch and discovered that I had not time to complete the work in my usual painstaking way. I skimmed the rest of it, and wrote down hurriedly the first Latin words that came into my head. Next day the master said to me "Lawrence, there is a remarkable difference in the two parts of this translation. The first part is what I may call your usual 'faithful dog', the second part has some character in it and is much more like Latin. I gasped in surprise, and naturally was not slow in future to profit by the unconscious advice."

I have no recollections that suggest that as a child I possessed any aesthetic sense whatever. Music, poetry, painting had no meaning for me, and my mother's rhapsodies on the sunset and her enjoyment of the 'nice drive', which the whole family indulged in every afternoon awakened in me no response.

I had a passion for games. Though ordinary 'playing-cards' were forbidden us (being somehow regarded as wicked), we had all sorts of substitute card games. One was called 'Wedding' there were pictures of bride and bridegroom, parson and clerk, the rejected lover, and the lawyer on whose turning up the game was for some mysterious reason brought to an end. Then we had 'Proverbs', of which the shortest was 'little and good'—That's what papa used to call me, my mother would say—and also a fascinating spectacular game called 'Stock Exchange'.

One of the griefs of my childhood was the cruelty inflicted on horses in the streets when the whip was in constant use. This was a surprise to my sisters, who had watched with dismay how as a little child of three years old I had so flogged the little wooden horses attached to a toy cart, given to me in Mentone, that all their paint had come off. Whether, in this, I was merely imitating what I had observed or obeying some elemental impulse I leave to psychiatrists to conjecture.

My grandfather Lawrence was a Cornish carpenter. When he was nineteen he walked to Plymouth and came by ship to London, where he worked his way up in his trade, becoming a master builder and the head of the firm of William Lawrence & Sons. They built a considerable part of Cannon Street. He was a member of the Carpenters' Company, was elected Alderman for the Bread Street Ward and, later, Sheriff of the City of London. Had he lived two years longer he would have been Lord Mayor. Thus he followed close in the steps of Dick Whittington.

He was a man of superabundant energy and pronounced principles. When, in 1817, he married Jane Clark, a Leicestershire woman, his unorthodox religious views compelled him, while conforming to the only legal form of marriage, to make certain protests all through the ceremony. Later, he joined the Unitarians, and in association with that body and in other ways took an active part in public life.

Of his eleven children, Alfred, my father, came fifth. Strange as it may seem, though I was nearly three and a half years old when he died, I have no recollection of him whatever. While still in middle life he had an accident by colliding with a pillar in a railway-station as he was running along beside a moving train. I think he must have suffered an internal injury which was never discovered, as in those days there was no X-ray photography. He succumbed to pleurisy, after vainly seeking health on the French Riviera.

My mother was a very gentle woman who loved peace and harmony. She was frankly overpowered by the vigorous Lawrence personality which enjoyed disputation and revelled in defending cherished beliefs. When she was left a widow at the age of 36 she had little or no experience of the world, and deferred without protest to the views of her Lawrence relatives as to where and how she should live, and how the family should be brought up. I came very close to her at many times in my life, particularly when I was alone with her, but when all her children were gathered round the table together, each expressing an opinion in a loud voice, I think she

wistfully regretted that there was quite so much Lawrence in us, and that it had not been diluted or mellowed by a little more of her own temperament

As a granddaughter of the famous preacher Robert Aspland, she inherited Unitarianism and it sufficed for all her religious needs. With its repudiation of eternal damnation, a doctrine then widely held, it fitted in well with her gentle and kindly nature. When her brother-in-law expounded to her the Darwinian theory of evolution she accepted it, but with resignation. It was a pity to have to throw over the simple Bible explanation of the creation of the world in 4004 B.C.

She took us all, every Sunday morning, to the Unitarian 'Essex Church', and greatly preferred sermons about the beatitudes and brotherly kindness to doctrinal polemics on theology. The Mothers' Meeting, associated with the church, gave scope to her natural instinct to befriend the poor and the weak, and for years after her death her memory was affectionately cherished by those with whom it brought her into contact.

My father's youngest brother, Edwin, whom he chose to be our guardian after his death, had a personality very different from that of my mother. A man of abounding energy and almost encyclopaedic knowledge, he endeared himself to me from my earliest years because, having still a boy's heart, he understood what a boy wanted and gave it to me. As a tiny child I used to ride on his back and pull his whiskers from behind as though they were reins. Of course this was not really allowed, but he was never angry about it. As I grew older he stimulated my natural love of mathematics, and taught me the common sense way of looking at problems.

He was as fond of games as I was, and allowed me to play billiards on his own table when I was so small that I could not use a cue. With the mace which he gave me instead I cut the cloth in several places—a terrible thing for me to have done—but he defended me when it was found out, saying it was his fault for giving me one with such sharp edges. Later, he used to have me fetched over in his dog-cart from school on holidays to his house at Ascot, and we used to play on a sliding handicap until at length it was I, then in my twenties, who was giving him points in the game.

of Lambeth On many matters of public concern they held and put into practice advanced views, and when they and Edwin, as the existing partners of William Lawrence & Sons, retired from business, they handed over the entire going concern as a free gift to nine of their foremen

Jane kept house for her two brothers until James, at the advanced age of 64, took to himself a wife and begat a child Aunt Jane had an exceptionally sharp tongue and was the terror of my mother, my sisters and myself But her bark was worse than her bite, and many were her secret benefactions

In old age she became deaf and began rapidly to go downhill, but when her brother William was dying she determined not to let go until she had looked after him to the end One day the doctors paid their usual visit and after examining her withdrew to a corner of the room to consult In low voices they expressed their amazement that with her organs in decay she continued to live on "What does he say?" said my aunt to a relative standing by "No heart, no lungs, no kidneys!" But her iron will prevailed and she outlived my uncle by a fortnight

I was born in London in 1871, the year that saw the end of the Franco-Prussian war My birthday was December 28th, a day after that of my eldest sister, Ellen, who had been born in 1860 So Christmastime saw three celebrations all in one, which was certainly a disadvantage from a child's point of view My birthplace was 42, Gloucester Gardens, Bishop's Road, not very far from Paddington Station on the one side and Westbourne Grove on the other I think the electric arc lights at Paddington had been erected a few years earlier, but I remember being taken as a great treat to see the incandescent electric light outside Whiteley's shop, which I was told was the first of its kind in this country The streets as a whole were dimly lighted with fish tail gas burners, and inside our house we used colza oil lamps which had to be wound up at intervals, to go up to our bedrooms we had candles

Though, as I have said, I do not remember my father I do remember vaguely being taught to say "*Allez, Allez*" to the little boys who turned Catherine wheels alongside our carriage at Mentone, so close to us that we were afraid they would be run over I also recollect learning my letters on the floor at an hotel in Folkestone when the family had come back from the Continent

When I was six a governess came to give me lessons I liked her very much, though at times I fancy I led her a great dance She sometimes read to me from *Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales* This was a great treat, as my mother rather disapproved of fairy stories and even tabooed *Alice in Wonderland* as inclined to make children believe what was not true! But I was terribly grieved for the 'little mermaid' My governess was the daughter of a Unitarian Minister and much of her religious teaching I accepted without question But when she spoke of the Mohammedans and told me that they also worshipped one God, but that he was a different God from the one that Christians worshipped, I replied that I did not understand how that could be

When I was seven years old my mother confided in me that she was forty It seemed a great age, and she certainly looked the part in her



widow's weeds, which she continued to wear for many years until she discarded them for a little cap. I wonder what she would have thought of the women of well over fifty today who as mothers, and sometimes as grandmothers, partnered me in lawn tennis tournaments a few years ago and could still play an excellent game.

When I was eight or nine I went to a day-school in London kept by a Mr Topham, a pedagogue of quite the old-fashioned style. It was there that I was made to wear the wooden 'torture' to teach me to write. But I enjoyed doing the sums he set us and found the Greek alphabet quite interesting. The school used to go for a walk every day in Hyde Park, and in cold weather we ran races, still wearing our great-coats. As we never changed our clothes when we got home and were often wet through with perspiration, I wonder none of our parents ever protested against it.

I used to go every summer with my mother and sisters to spend several weeks at the seaside, first at Brighton, and in later years at Folkestone, which suited me much better as I was able to indulge my passion for digging in the sand. There, too, I was initiated into lawn tennis, and watched with admiration the play of a number of men who used the over-head smash shot, which had only recently come into use.

On Christmas Day we always drove over to see my mother's father, Henry Ridge, who had an old fashioned home in Stamford Hill. He fulfilled exactly the tradition of 'grandpapa' and had a well trimmed white beard. He was a stock-jobber and used to share *The Times* newspaper with a neighbour to whom he sent it along shortly after his midday dinner. I remember his disgust with Mr Gladstone because he put up the income tax to 'fippence'.

At eleven, I left home for the first time to go to a boarding school called Wixenford. It was at Eversley, near Wokingham, in Berkshire, and was kept by a nephew of the great Arnold of Rugby. When my mother left me in the big dining-room of the school with Mrs Arnold I certainly felt a bit queer, but I was comforted by the presence of another little boy in much the same plight. It was John Walter of the famous *Times* family. Of course I saw much of him at Wixenford, and I remember my discomfiture when he beat me in the chess competition and carried off the school chess prize. Later, when we were at Eton together, he used to say jokingly that if I was senior wrangler I should do the weather chart for *The Times*, and so, when I eventually came out fourth, he wrote me a postcard with the cryptic wording 'Congratulations but not good enough for the weather chart'.

Another of my Wixenford schoolmates was Robert Trevelyan, the poet, the second son of Sir George Trevelyan who was Irish Secretary under Gladstone. Unlike John Walter and myself, he went to Harrow, but rejoined me at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which his brother George is now Master. At Wixenford he was always known by his nickname 'the Dodo'. I remember going with him during the holidays to his house in London, where we played with a truly magnificent set of lead soldiers belonging to his father. Our friendship has lasted all our life and his house today is quite close to my own in Surrey.

A third Wixenfordian whose path crossed mine again in later life was a younger boy with black hair and dark eyes and an unmistakable Irish accent. He was Hugh Law, afterwards one of the Parnellite members

of Parliament Shortly after my marriage I paid a visit to his house in Ballymore, near Londonderry, and imbibed something of the atmosphere of Irish politics

Wixenford was on the whole a well run preparatory school It had extensive grounds in which we played football, cricket and a little lawn tennis The tone of the school was good punishments were few and the masters were well up to their work and on very fair terms with the boys

Arnold himself was rather a terror to us A giant in stature (I think he was 6 feet 5 inches tall) he used as a minor punishment to stand a boy on a chair and lift up his chin till his face was close to his own and in that position give him a wiggling But he was never cruel or vindictive With the classical masters I naturally did not find much favour, as I never took the smallest interest in the subjects they taught It was more surprising however that the chief mathematical master took a dislike to me, for I was certainly an apt pupil I remember that in my first year I was given the papers intended for the senior boys and only just failed to secure full marks Had I done so the master said he would have asked for a half holiday for the school which would have made me very popular with the boys

I left Wixenford in 1885 when I was 13½ years old Prompted by my schoolmates I had expressed a wish to my uncle to go to Eton, and as he was probably already of the same opinion he at once consented I think Arnold would have liked me to try for a scholarship but as my uncle thought that would be unfair to boys who really were in need of free schooling I did not sit for the examination

## CHAPTER II

### ETON

School superiority complex—Fagging—Lessons and games—Collegers and oppidans  
—Grandfather's death—Captain of the oppidans—Royal visitors—Mr Gladstone—Afterthoughts about Eton

THE outstanding characteristic of Eton as I knew it in the 'eighties of last century was its superiority complex. This permeated the school from the headmaster to the smallest inky-cuffed Lower boy and extended to the tradespeople and the whole town I need hardly explain that I use the phrase in a collective, and not an individual sense, and that it has nothing to do with what boys call 'cockiness', or with that aggressive self assertion which generally springs from an exactly opposite complex.

Of course a sort of group-patriotism is a common human trait not confined to Eton It is nothing unusual, therefore, that in the Eton Boating Song a promise is made always to 'swear by the best of schools' and a contrast is drawn between Eton and others in the words

Harrow may be more clever  
Rugby may make more row  
But we'll swing together  
Steady from stroke to bow

which the boys called a burry (? bureau), a chair and a table. We had our tea in our rooms, sometimes sharing with a messmate, and we also had breakfast there until Mr Cole decided to provide breakfast downstairs. We were given a new candle each evening, by the light of which to do our 'prep' work. In the winter the boys' maid used to come in, before we got up, to lay the fire, and I remember that I usually slept right through all the noise she made.

When the boys went home for the holidays reports were sent after them by the various masters who had had to deal with them. The one written about me by my principal class master, a Mr Impey, rather surprised my people by its unconventionality. It ran: 'Good sober old fellow.'

Having fallen a victim in the Christmas holidays to the virulent influenza epidemic, I arrived back at Eton a few weeks after the Lent 'half' had begun, and found that I was no longer a Lower boy. I had at my entry the previous September been placed in 'Remove', a kind of 'tweeny' class between the fourth form (the second\* lowest in the school) and the fifth, and according to usual practice I should have spent three 'halves' working my way up through its subdivisions. But in the examinations in December I had (I was told) distinguished myself in mathematics by scoring 201½ marks out of a maximum of 200, and I suppose my other papers were not too hopeless. Even so I do not think that Johnny Cole would have been able to secure special promotion for me if it had not been that another boy was in much the same position and his housemaster insisted that he should go up to the fifth. That meant that I was promoted too. The other boy was Hogg, who later sat opposite to me for some years in the House of Commons and is now Lord Hailsham. Once in the fifth, promotion was by seniority only, and Hogg and I went up through the school together with our names in the same (alphabetical) order side by side.

Next half was again a broken one for me. Though an Upper boy I was allowed to play cricket on 'sixpenny', the field given over to the Lower boys who were, of course, my real contemporaries in age. I was making some progress in the game for the first time when I fell a victim to whooping cough. I went home and my mother nursed me with the same loving care through this the last of my childish illnesses that she had shown when I had had chicken pox, measles, scarlet fever and influenza. As a convalescent I spent a very happy six weeks with her at Margate and indulged in horse riding, archery and riding a tricycle. At the end of it Uncle Edwin took our whole family away with him to Switzerland and initiated me into the delights of foreign travel.

I had no further interruptions in my school life. The Eton week consisted of three whole school days and three half holidays. Early school was from 7 to 8, then, after breakfast, there was chapel school from 9.45 to 10.30 and again from 11.15 to 12. Dinner was at 2, afternoon school for the Upper boys was from 3 to 4 and 5 to 6. Of course in addition

\* The lowest was the third form presided over by Mr Inge afterwards the famous Dean of St Paul's.

† The explanation was that there were three papers—on arithmetic, algebra and Euclid. As the total marks allotted to them was 200, and as 200 does not divide by 3, 67 was full marks for each.

a great deal of preparation had to be done in one's own house out of school hours. All red letter Saints' Days were whole holidays (quite a number of them each half), and on those no work was done after early school. One or two days in the year were known as '*non dies*', because on them there was no work in school at all.

Latin and Greek occupied most of our time and I found them deadly dull. No doubt at that age my mind was most sterile soil in which to implant the seeds of literature. But I cannot help thinking that the worst method was adopted of arousing our interest. If we were 'doing' a Greek play, for instance, we got through some 20 lines only in each lesson, and all the stress was placed on our knowing the cases of the nouns and the tenses of the verbs. At this rate we scarcely ever completed the play before the end of the 'half'. Even the literal meaning of the sentences generally escaped me, and of the tremendous human issues of the drama I never had the foggiest notion. I suspect that only a tiny minority of my class-mates would have a different tale to tell.

When it came to mathematics I was one of the exceptions who understood what it was all about, and occasionally in my later years, when I was in a privileged position, I used to put conundrums to the masters. I remember a fierce argument I had over the precise mechanical reaction of an oarsman rowing a boat, and in the end I gained my point. Each year the boys with a mathematical bent competed for the Tomline prize. While I was at Eton it was won in three successive years by boys of 16 or 17 over boys two or three years their senior. (Of course previous winners did not compete.) The first of these was Philip Cowell, who was afterwards senior wrangler and, later, editor of the *Nautical Almanac*. I still meet him once a year at the Trinity College Commemoration. The second was Hurst, who afterwards was second wrangler in the year following Cowell. I was the third in the line. Some years later I was invited to examine for the Tomline and the other mathematical prizes at Eton. I have kept the papers of the examinees and in looking over the names I find that of 'Keynes', who is now the celebrated economist.

Another subject which fascinated me was what was referred to as 'science' and covered elementary physics and chemistry. The lectures were given in the laboratory with experiments, and as soon as I had enough money to afford it I bought some apparatus of my own, and repeated them in the holidays. Mr. Madden, the senior science master, had charge of the Eton Observatory, and it was a great thrill to get special permission to go out late in the evening to look through the telescope at the moon and the stars. The second science master and I became great friends and I used to go to his house after school hours to be initiated into higher branches of mathematics. I remember that the remaining science master was one of those who could never keep discipline. One day, on coming into the room he told us that he had had a bereavement and asked us for once not to be unruly. The class responded to the appeal and dead silence prevailed throughout the lesson.

The games at Eton were almost exclusively managed by the boys themselves, and each of the three 'halves' of the year had its appropriate game. Football ruled from September to December and included both the field game, already mentioned, and a peculiar game, played alongside a wall in college. This wall game was the only form of football played

by the collegers, and very few oppidans learnt it, I was always hoping to have the chance, but it never came my way. On St Andrew's Day each year the historic contest in the wall game took place between a team of oppidans and a team of collegers. From January to Easter we played the Eton variety of 'Fives', the courts being replicas of a natural court formed by the steps and the buttresses of the famous Eton Chapel. There were not nearly enough fives courts for all to play regularly, so this half got the name of the loafing half. From Easter to July 'dry bobs' played cricket and 'wet bobs' rowed on the river. Rather against my will I opted to be a 'dry bob', for my uncle said that otherwise I should only fit myself to be a navvy in after life.

Except in the class-rooms and in the annual football match collegers and oppidans had little social intercourse with one another. The collegers, having won their position by their brains, and being the true inheritors of the Foundation, probably looked down on the oppidans as slackers and even as interlopers. The oppidans were inclined to be disdainful of the collegers, many of whom came from a lower social class, and slightly referred to them as 'tugs', though the word originally only referred to the gowns (togas) they wore in school. Inside the ranks of the oppidans themselves there were no class distinctions, and in that sense it was a democratic society. The son of a successful merchant and the son of a duke were on precisely equal terms, were called by their surnames without prefix, and each had to take his turn of fagging. I remember Teck the brother of our present Queen Mother, coming to me once with a message from his fagmaster. Even the famous 'Eton Society', an exclusive club more commonly called 'Pop', was composed of boys who were popular and looked up to by their schoolmates, and so far as I know the social standing of their parents had nothing to do with their admission to its membership.

When I was 15, my grandfather Ridge died and I went up from Eton to London to attend the funeral, which was carried out with the usual ceremonies. I remember that on my return I was seized with uncontrollable mirth and recounted humorously the events of the day. But thinking it over later, I was terribly shocked at my own behaviour, for I was really fond of the old man, who had always been most kind to me. I did not of course know at the time that this was a common human reaction, which I have often since observed in others even where I least expected it\*. But it gave me an intense horror of the whole trappings of mourning—darkened rooms, slow moving coaches, black clothes and gloves and the rest—which has never left me. I remember G. K. Chesterton saying to me once that he thought the words of the burial service† were very grand, 'man that is born of woman is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.' "But," said he, 'what the whole function suggests to me is that man that is born of woman wears a black coat and a tall hat

\* I remember a man cracking jokes with the jury at the coroner's inquest on his deeply loved son, and a lady at the funeral of her sister picking up a glass of sherry with the words, 'Well here's to our next merry meeting', and then, recollecting how? "Oh what a damned fool I am!"

† The words used in the burial service are in reality slightly different.

and is full of hypocrisy and fear" I welcome profoundly therefore changes of thought and practice which evoke sincerity rather than conventional emotion, for it is surely only in spotless truth that we dare approach the Majesty of Death

In 1887 the Jubilee of Queen Victoria was celebrated all over the country. I was allowed a day's holiday from Eton to go with my uncles to the Mansion House to watch the procession in London. It was a gay and popular affair, and in contrast to the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, more civilian than military. A few days later I took part with my school-fellows in a torchlight procession through the grounds of Windsor Castle. We marched immediately in front of the Queen, who sat on a chair outside a door of the Castle to see us pass. In spite of her small stature, she was a dignified figure, and she had reigned so long that she seemed to be a permanent part of the British Constitution.

As the school halves went by and I rose through the various subdivisions of the fifth form, I fell more into line with my schoolfellows and shed a good deal of my aloofness and angularity. This change was accentuated by the fact that at the end of my fourth year Johnny Cole retired and I was transferred to a newly formed house presided over by Sidney James, known to the boys as 'Kidney Beans'. About the same time, or soon after, I passed over into the sixth form, the highest at Eton, consisting of a single class taught by the headmaster himself when he was free to do so and, in his absence, by his assistant.

Edmund Warre, the Head, was, as I remember him, a bluff powerful man rather like the typical John Bull but with a scholarly face. One of his functions was to interview boys who were reported to him for some misdemeanour and to admonish them and sometimes to punish them. The most serious offences involved a flogging. Frequently, as a member of the sixth, I had to summon the offender, going round to the class-room where he was and giving my message. I then had to be present when the admonition was pronounced or the punishment imposed. I remember one small boy called Bagge, who had somehow got on the soft side of the Head, being sent for on account of being late for chapel. When asked to explain his conduct he said "Well, sir, it was partly your fault, you got in my way when I was trying to go in." To this the Head replied with a chuckle "I shall take good care that you don't get round me this time." His own joke so pleased him that no punishment was given.

The sixth form consisted of ten collegers and ten oppidans, and the former all ranked in school order above the latter. The senior colleger was therefore always the 'Captain of the School', but the senior oppidan had an important place of his own with the title 'Captain of the Oppidans'. Hogg reached this position in the last half of 1890, and, when he left Eton at Christmas, I stepped into his shoes for the remaining two halves of the school year, which ended at midsummer.

I inherited a box which told me all about my privileges, duties and responsibilities. I had the right to sit in the school tent during school cricket matches and keep the score. I had the right to walk about the playing fields carrying a 'pop'\* cane. I had the duty of administering corporal punishment with it on Upper boys guilty of certain breaches of

\* So called because the members of the club 'Pop' had the right to carry them

school discipline I had the responsibility of managing the whole of the festivities connected with the celebration of the famous Fourth of June. All of these I duly carried out, including the caning of two oppidans who had insulted two of the collegers. But the Fourth of June festivities never materialized because on June 3 the wife of the Provost died (most inconsiderately, the boys said) and the function was cancelled. Instead, I arranged, in consultation with the headmaster, for a band and a fireworks display on a date later in the half.

On March 18 of that year (1891) the new Lower Schools were opened and a statue of Queen Victoria was unveiled by the Empress Frederick. The Queen herself also came in person to the ceremony. The captain of the school was given an address to present to the Queen, and I had one to present to the Empress. I remember that while we were waiting for the royal visitors to arrive the Duchess of Teck, whose son was at Eton, came and joined us, and she and her daughter Mary talked with us about the new building. I little suspected then that this same daughter would become a Queen and the mother of the present King of England. Of course the events of the day were fully reported in the Press and an imaginary picture of myself appeared in the *Daily Graphic*.

Another illustrious visitor to whom I was presented was the Rt Hon W E Gladstone. He came to Eton to lecture on Homer, a relaxation-subject in which he took great interest, though his views on it were considered by the orthodox to be unsound. The headmaster invited me to dine with him and, I remember, talked a great deal throughout the meal about the merits of sliding seats in the school boats. It seemed to me at the time that Mr Gladstone, though an old Etonian himself, was not much interested in the subject. He was already in advanced years and was evidently rather deaf, as he occasionally made asides to his wife in audible tones which we were not intended to overhear. But his eye was still keen and his face bespoke a personality accustomed to make decisions and to be obeyed.

Not long after this I said good-bye to the old school and to those boys who were not coming on with me to Cambridge. In accordance with custom I had my name cut into the wooden panelling of Upper School. My mind turned to the newer and wider life in front of me at Cambridge, where I had already won in examination the position of a minor Scholar of Trinity.

Since I have left Eton I have often asked myself the question whether, if I could have my time all over again, and had the choice as to where I should be sent to school during the formative years between 13 and 19 I would opt for Eton. I have never been able to give a decisive answer. There are so many *pros* and *cons*, and there is the unformulated part of the question as to what would have been the alternative.

There is no doubt that from the standpoint of worldly promotion my Eton schooldays have been of incalculable benefit to me in after life. Old Etonians have stood by me on many occasions, and have often extended their friendship to me even when I was vigorously attacking their privileges and their preconceived ideas. Also, the experience that I gained at Eton has given me an approach to men and affairs that has been invaluable.

to me both in business and politics. It is true that I paid a heavy price for this in the shape of unhappiness during several years of my life at Eton. But the very fact that I stood then against the stream strengthened my spirit of independent judgment and gave me self-reliance. Moreover, my unhappiness was largely my own fault, or at any rate the fault of my temperament and 'soft' upbringing. Wherever and however I had been educated, at some point or other I should have had to encounter the world and its standards, and there is some truth in the view that it is better that the shock of this encounter should be experienced early in life, before outlook and character become crystallized.

On the other side of the account must be set the exaggerated importance attached at Eton in my day to convention. The minutest departure from correct behaviour or clothing was an offence. It was contrary to good form *not* to put one's hands in one's pockets, or to walk on the wrong side of the street. During my first half I was subjected to ragging because my Eton jacket had a slight peak at the back. At every point of school life—at work, at play, at meals, in chapel in one's own room—conduct was liable to censure on the ground that it failed to conform to the unwritten code. I am aware of course, that this is to some extent a common failing of mankind, particularly of the young, and even extends, as I have often observed, to the animal creation. But I am convinced that at Eton and possibly at other public schools it is far more imperiously enforced than elsewhere, with the result that originality tends to be stifled and freedom of action and expression crushed. It has taken me nearly all my life to escape from this inhibition, if indeed even now I have fully emancipated myself from it.

There remains to be answered a different question. Quite apart from the benefit to those who attend Eton, is it desirable for the nation that such an institution should be confined mainly to boys of one class? This question is really dual. Should there be segregation of the sexes? Should there be segregation of the classes? On the first I will only say that, in my opinion, co-educational schools are still in the experimental stage, unless and until they are an approved success there is room for a considerable widening of educational facilities (not merely in scholarship) for girls.

The second is the more living issue today and the answer must depend on our hopes for the future of our country. In the nineteenth century the gulf between the classes was wide and only a very few of those on one side of it could expect to attain to positions of authority in the nation. There was then some excuse for maintaining a school confined to that class which was likely to benefit most from the educational opportunities it had to offer.

But the situation is quite different today. Class distinctions are less rigid and men and women of approved ability in all classes are filling the highest offices of State. Already the Universities are coming more and more into line with this new conception. If Eton has high traditions which are worthy to be retained, as I believe it has, if it possesses a breadth of educational outlook which makes it peculiarly fitted to train the statesmen of the future, surely it is essential that character and ability shall be the credentials which entitle a boy to entry, and not the length of the parental purse?



## CHAPTER III

## CAMBRIDGE

Trinity College—Webb of St John's—The romance of mathematics—Undergraduate life—Fourth wrangler—A double first—Smith's prizeman—Alfred Marshall—President of the Union—Visits to Oxford—Joe Chamberlain—Billiards for the University—A trip to America—Dr Brooke Herford—An eclipse of the sun in Norway—Fellow of Trinity

THE six years that I spent at Trinity College, Cambridge, stand out in my life as a period of unclouded satisfaction. The work I had to do was what I loved. The restraints of childhood had gone, the responsibilities of manhood had not begun. I had a wide choice of friends, in communion with whom I was free to explore the foundations of the universe. There were opportunities for all kinds of recreation—games, hospitality, and the theatre. Behind all was the background of historic tradition embodied in college buildings and courts, in the sacred grass on which only the Fellows might tread, in the famous 'Backs', in the river, in the ritual of University life, in the great personalities with whom we were brought into daily contact. With such a banquet spread out before one, only a psychological dyspeptic could fail to enjoy the repast.

Years afterwards, when I was travelling in Egypt with a dragoman, I remember discussing with him the contrasts between his life and mine. His schooldays had ended before he was 10 years old. Mine, I told him, had continued at school and at college until I was 25. 'What a waste,' was his comment, 'to spend so many years preparing for life! Why, you might have died before you reached the end of your schooldays and then you would never have tasted life at all!' My view about it was as incomprehensible to him as my statement that it was the rotation of the earth and not the motion of the sun that gave us day and night. 'Look,' said he, pointing to the sun as we stood together at daybreak by the Sphinx, 'you can see him rising.'

Mathematics was the premier subject at Cambridge. Indeed, at one time, I believe, it was necessary for everyone to pass in mathematics before he was allowed to devote himself to anything else. This had ceased to be the case when I went 'up' to Cambridge, but the Mathematical Tripos was still regarded as the most important way of taking a degree with honours. Those who took it were placed in order of merit in three classes, the highest class being the 'wranglers', and the ambition of every mathematician was to be the senior wrangler of his year.

In addition to attending lectures provided by the University or by their own college, students who wanted to excel took private lessons with a 'coach', and some of these coaches attained such a fame that their pupils came to them from all over the University and were taught in groups. Routh had had a great reputation in the eighties, but he had retired before I went up (in 1891), and his mantle had fallen on Webb of St John's College. To his rooms I used to go accordingly three times a week, in company with the men from my own and other colleges who were expected to be high wranglers.

I can see him now with his little black beard, which he used to twist

lution in University life. The old 'pennyfarthing' had never, of course, been a practical means of locomotion, and in consequence we walked everywhere. But the 'safety' could be mounted at any time in any clothes and left anywhere. It saved time, enabled sports grounds to be much further out from the colleges, and brought within easy reach of a visit friends residing a few miles away from Cambridge. Women's 'safeties' also came into vogue about the same time, and I remember during a vacation going with my sister Ellen to Battersea Park, where society women daily took their exercise on the new steed. Most of them drove in their carriages to the park and mounted the bicycles which had been brought there for them by servants, and some actually had a footman riding on a separate bicycle behind them in the same way as when horse-riding in Rotten Row! Meanwhile, my future wife and her sisters were breaking conventions by bicycling through the streets of their home-town, Weston super-Mare.

In due course, in 1894, I went in for the examination for the Mathematical Tripos. It covered an immense range of subjects—between 30 and 40 altogether. I think, many of the questions were so erudite that I could scarcely understand what was intended by them, still less supply the answer. This did not very much matter as each of the papers contained far more questions than any examinee could be expected to deal with in the time at his disposal. I was most interested in the 'problem' papers and I think I did best in them. In the result I was placed fourth, the position of senior wrangler being divided by two men, my friends Adie and Sedgwick. The former had the unique distinction of getting at the same time his 'blue' for rowing in the Cambridge boat against Oxford.

Most of the men in my year, having passed their examination and taken their B.A. degree, 'went down' at the end of their third year, but a few stayed on to do further work and these included nearly all my mathematical friends and myself. Some took Part II of the Mathematical Tripos, some went in for engineering or other courses. I decided to take Part I of the Natural Science Tripos, and selected as my subjects physics, chemistry, mineralogy, and geology. This took me to the famous Cavendish laboratory and brought me in contact with such interesting men as George Darwin (son of the author of *Origin of Species*), J. J. Thomson (afterwards Master of Trinity) and Gabriel Stokes. I never got more than a smattering of the two latter subjects, but my physics and chemistry carried me into the first class of the Tripos, and I thus achieved what is known as a 'double first'.

Meanwhile, one day during my fourth year, Sedgwick, the senior wrangler, in the course of a casual conversation put me a poser about finding the factors of a certain very large number. I at once suggested a method of attacking the problem and by a curious accident it almost immediately yielded the solution. This set me developing it, and when the time came for sending in essays for the Smith's prizes I wrote one on this subject and with it won the second Smith's prize, W. S. Adie winning the first with an essay on hydrodynamics. Fresh ideas came to me about it from time to time and to my immense delight Dr. Glasier accepted a

\* That is a first class in two triposes. Mine were Mathematics and Natural Science.

paper of mine on it in the journal which he edited, the *Messenger of Mathematics*. Later I contributed other papers on it to the Mathematical Society.

In my fifth year I decided to branch out in a new direction and attended the lectures on economics by Alfred Marshall. Of all the men with whom I came in contact at the University none made a greater impression on me than he, and his lectures were not only illuminating but inspiring. While he insisted that the 'laws' of economics were statements of fact like the laws of nature, and not commands to be obeyed like Acts of Parliament, he really cared passionately that a knowledge of economics should be applied to bettering the lot of humanity and in particular of the underdog. He held strong political views and every now and again expressed them. It was a fascinating sight to see the little man standing with his back to the wall facing his class and letting himself go, with a twinkle in his eye which suggested that he realized he was perhaps stepping outside the proper rôle of a Professor of the University. I remember in particular one of his *dicta* made shortly after the Jameson raid, to the effect that Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was a negative asset to the country which he assessed at several hundred million pounds!

Marshall had himself given to the University a sum of money to provide from time to time a prize, to be known as the Adam Smith prize, for an original essay on some economic subject, and he stimulated me to enter for this prize and suggested an investigation into local variations in wages. I speedily set to work, starting with a number of already published statistics, and following up with a visit to different parts of the country interviewing trade union secretaries, employers and others. I had been rather doubtful about the reception I should get and was agreeably surprised at the friendliness shown to me and the trouble that was taken to answer my somewhat academic questions. When I came to write down my results I used a number of graphs in a slightly new way in order to bring home to the reader at a glance the totality of the facts. Incidentally I was able to demonstrate that wages tended to vary with the size of the towns. My essay won the prize and was subsequently published by the London School of Economics.

When I first went up to Cambridge I joined the 'Union', the University club and debating society, and, as an undergraduate, I took an occasional part in the discussions. I remember that on one occasion the reporter said that I spoke 'in contemptuous footnotes' and on another referred to me as one of three 'fierce individualists' who wound up the evening. Egged on by my friend A. Y. G. Campbell, afterwards a prominent member of the Indian Civil Service, I determined to stand for office. In the election for secretary I probably got the votes of most of the Trinity men and also those of old Etonians from all over the University, and as a consequence I secured the position. In accordance with usual practice, I was elected Vice President next term, which made me the manager of the club, and I became President the term after. I had imagined it would be rather boring to have to sit and listen right through all the speeches, but I found the fact that the speakers were addressing their words to the 'Chair' kept my interest throughout. One of the special visitors to the Union during my period in office was the actor, Sir Squire Bancroft, who attracted a full house.

At Oxford there is also a Union debating society, and the two bodies are interrelated by the rule that membership of the one carries honorary membership of the other. While I held official position in the Cambridge Union I went on several occasions to visit the Oxford Union, of which F. W. Hirst was President, having succeeded John Simon in the chair. I remember in particular a debate on the proposal to allow women to become full members of the Universities and obtain degrees, which after some hesitation I had decided to support. There were the usual jokes 'Where all was perfect there could be no question of degree' 'A woman could reach a higher position in Cambridge than a man, for whereas he could be senior wrangler she could be "above the senior wrangler"'—this had actually happened in the case of Philippa Fawcett. Then Hilaire Belloc got up. He described in most moving language a picture he had seen of a nurse looking down with infinite tenderness on a wounded soldier. The moral he quite inconsequently drew was that if women were allowed to cultivate their intellectual faculties they would lose their womanliness. I forget which way the voting went, but of course, in any case, the real decision did not rest with us.

As President of the Union it was my privilege to represent the University elsewhere on many occasions. I remember going with Hirst to Birmingham to a centenary dinner of the Goldsmiths and being taken to lunch next day with Joseph Chamberlain at his house in Highbury. The great man showed me his orchid house from which each day a blossom was picked for his buttonhole and he was most genial to us both. I met there also his son Austen, himself a Cambridge graduate, who was already looking forward to following his father in politics, but Neville I did not meet, as he had been cast for a business career, and was, I believe, at the time in America.

I also went to Glasgow for the 450th anniversary of the foundation of that University and was presented to Lord Kelvin. I was told afterwards an amusing story about him earlier in life when, as plain William Thomson, he went up to London to receive his knighthood. Thomson was a brilliant mathematician and scientist, but a poor lecturer, and, during his absence, his place was taken much more successfully by his assistant, Mr. Day. Shortly before his return a wag among his students wrote up on the blackboard "Work while we have Day for the Knight cometh when no man can work!"

I played billiards for Cambridge University against Oxford and with my colleague won the event. I won the quarter mule at Fenner's in the sports of Third Trinity and King's\*. For other recreation I played football (Association) and lawn tennis whenever I could get the opportunity, and racquets occasionally. The game of bridge had not been invented but we used to play whist on Saturday evenings. During the Lent term in 1895 the Cam was frozen over for several weeks, and more than once I skated on it all the way from Cambridge to Ely and back on the special flat skates called fen runners.

One of the visitors to Cambridge who came to speak to us undergraduates about what was going on in the outside world was Percy Alden,

\* The old Eton and Westminster boys in Trinity College form a group of their own known as 'Third Trinity' for rowing and football. Third Trinity joins with King's College for athletic sports.

the warden of the Mansfield House University Settlement in Canning Town. He succeeded in rousing my social conscience, and persuaded me to come and visit the settlement. I went more than once. I spoke at the P.S.A. I brought down a concert party and myself gave a musical sketch. What I saw about the settlement I liked. It breathed a real spirit of fraternity and there was no trace of sectarian religionism. Alden and I became close friends and I promised him my active support.

Meanwhile, at Cambridge I had joined the Nonconformist Union, and had been a regular attendant at its Sunday evening meetings. I read papers there myself on *Evolution*, the *Theory of Punishment*, the *Treatment of Animals*, and *Gambling*. I repeated the last at the Livingstone Society in Oxford and became the guest of Mansfield College, the parent body of the Mansfield House Settlement. The Principal was the sturdy Scot, Dr. Fairbairn, who exercised a great influence on the men of his college, who were all studying for the Congregational ministry. In the adjoining grounds was Manchester College, the Unitarian foundation, at the head of which was the spiritually minded Dr. Edward Carpenter. My special association with this college I will tell in a later chapter.

As a boy, I had accepted without question most of the teaching of my elders about religion as part of the knowledge possessed by grown-ups. It was not till I was at Cambridge that I examined critically the whole basis of belief and found to my surprise how different it was in character from that underlying other subjects in which I was instructed. Many of my friends at Cambridge had reached the same stage in their development, and long were the discussions which we had together, in our rooms or walking round and round the Courts far on into the night. In one of the vacations I went and talked it all over with Dr. Brooke Herford, a venerable Unitarian divine, who had for many years had a church in Boston, U.S.A., and was now installed in Hampstead. Naturally he could not solve all my difficulties, but at least he did not run away from reality and he made me understand that the search for absolute truth was never likely to be rewarded with complete success. So I began the process which has gone on all my life of building up my own philosophy, about which I shall have more to write before I conclude my story.

It was the same Dr. Herford who was my cabin companion in the summer of 1895 when I went with my sister Annie to visit the United States. Our ship was the *Gallia* of some 8000 tons, considered a fine vessel in its day but, according to modern ideas, small for an Atlantic liner. We had a pretty severe buffeting on our way across to Boston, but we got there without mishap. In Boston we had many friends of our family and many leading Unitarians to become acquainted with. Emerson the writer had not been dead many years, and we stayed with his daughter in Concord and she took us round the sacred spots. In Chicago I had my first meeting with Jane Addams, of the Hull House Settlement, who was already playing an active part in the life of the city. She told us that her grandfather had driven his buggy to Lake Michigan at a time when on its shores there were no houses at all. I was most interested in watching a fair sized house being moved bodily through the streets from one site to another. Our visit included also New York, Washington and the Falls of Niagara.

On August 9, 1896, occurred an eclipse of the sun, the line of totality

passing through the North of Norway. The little fishing village of Vadso was chosen by astronomers for the scene of their operations, a place which recently came into the news during the Russo-Finnish War of 1940. I booked a passage on the *Norse King*, specially chartered for a voyage up the coast and round the North Cape, and spent a most delightful month. A merry ship's company landed in many a charming fjord, and we made excursions across the mountains in tiny carriages, coming back to the ship to sleep. But the observations of the eclipse were a failure, for a few seconds before totality a small cloud passed between us and the discs of the sun and moon.

Every year Trinity awards a limited number of Fellowships to men of the College who after a successful record of work submit original essays on some subjects of academic interest. The whole body of the Fellows, together with the Master (a royal appointment), form the governing body of the college. Fellows are not bound to reside in the University or take any part in its activities, but unless they do so their Fellowship is not likely to be continued beyond the original term of six years. I determined to compete for this greatly coveted honour. In 1896 I submitted an essay on factorization of numbers, I did not succeed. In 1897 I tried again and sent in two essays, one on the same subject simplified and improved, the other on 'Local Variations in Wages' with which I had already won the Adam Smith prize. Only two Fellowships were being awarded that year, but I was fortunate enough to secure one of them, my colleague being H. M. Fletcher. I thus became a member of a Society which in its long history has contained the names of some of the most famous scholars of their day, and whose tradition it is to esteem a man, not in accord with the value he puts on himself, but by the contribution he makes to the furtherance of learning and human culture.

## CHAPTER IV

### ROUND THE WORLD

India before the motor-car—Famine in Madras—A question of Exchange—The Brahma-Samaj—Another eclipse of the sun—Jamabandy—Ceylon—Australia and New Zealand—China—Japan—Fujiyama—U.S.A.—The Yellowstone Park

It had never been my intention to stay up at the University and become a don. Much as I loved Cambridge, I had always regarded it as a gateway to a larger life, and the fact that I had become a Fellow of Trinity did not alter my view. I proceeded to plan a voyage round the world in which most of my time would be spent in distant countries which I might not be able to visit again later, when commitments were likely to prevent a prolonged absence from home.

Several of my college friends had taken up work in India, mostly as Civil Servants, and I had pressing invitations to come and stay with them for as long as I liked. Accordingly, losing no time *en route*, I went straight to Bombay by P. and O., and on from there by rail to an up-country station, Nellore, in the Madras Presidency on the East coast, where my

friend Campbell was Assistant Collector. I was just settling down to life in the 'station', when Campbell was summoned away to take charge of famine relief at Udayagiri.

It was only 60 miles from Nellore, and nowadays would be covered comfortably in a motor-car in two or three hours. But in 1897 there were no cars in India. Further, there was no railway between the two places. A horse could not possibly do the journey in less than three or four days, and there was nowhere to spend the nights unless complete camping outfit was taken, which would involve great delay. A trotting bullock bandy and a bicycle were the only means of locomotion left. Campbell decided to use them both, starting in the bandy with his bicycle on top and getting out when the heat of the day had passed to try to ride the rest of the 60 miles to his destination before dusk. Failing that, he hoped to get some accommodation for the night, feeding on biscuits and soda water and completing the journey in the early morning. Clearly a visitor would be in the way, so I was left behind.

My position was not too easy, for I had to remake my plans, repack my luggage and start off on a new journey, while none of Campbell's servants understood a word of English. However, the camaraderie of the British in India is such that I had a very pleasant time, and after waiting a few days to see whether Campbell was coming back or wanted me to join him, I telegraphed to another of my friends, W S Adie, the senior wrangler, and received an assurance of welcome to Mozuffapore, in Bihar, where he was stationed.

I had first to get to Calcutta, and as the East Coast Railway had not then been built, this meant going down to Madras and then up by sea. I found a P and O ship lying out in the harbour which had left England the same day as myself, and getting all my luggage, including my bicycle, on to a flat-bottomed surf-boat, consisting of loose planks tied together by cords, I was rowed out to the ship by a swarthy crew. A few days' steaming brought us to the Hooghly river on which Calcutta lies—a treacherous stream which is always changing its bed. 'All passengers on deck' was called out at the danger point where a former ship, the *William and Mary*, had been sunk with passengers trapped below. But we encountered no trouble and arrived safely in port.

While in Madras I had opened a banking account, depositing pounds and being credited with rupees at the existing rate of exchange. It was gratifying to find in Calcutta that the credit of a casual English traveller was such that the branch of the bank there volunteered to cash a cheque for me forthwith, accepting my word that I had not drawn it all out in the meantime. Later, when I came to leave India and closed my account, I found that the rupees still outstanding were worth more pounds than when I had put them in. I remember puzzling my head at the time to discover at whose expense, if at anyone's, I had made this 'profit'. I leave my readers to work it out for themselves!

Arrived in Mozuffapore I soon fell into the ways of the station, going to the Court-house in the mornings to hear Adie try cases, bicycling round between 12 and 2 to pay 'propriety' calls on the ladies of the British community, and playing lawn tennis and billiards at the club later in the day. Mozuffapore is in the middle of the indigo district, and one day a planter came and carried me away to spend a night with him at his farm.

and factory. There I found men, women and children working in the fields for the barest pittance. I was told that the men earned 10 pies a day, the women 8 and the children 4 or 6. As 12 pies make 1 anna and 16 annas make 1 rupee, this meant that, with the rupee at 1s 4d, the men were earning less than the biblical penny a day, and the whole family only twopence or twopence-halfpenny! In the New Year I went back to Calcutta and did the usual sights, including a ball at Government House. I also engaged a Mussulman travelling 'boy' to look after me and my luggage during my further travels through India. Though called a boy he was old enough to be my father and gave me devoted service.

My family, being Unitarians, had made contact with the Brahma-Samaj movement in India and had entertained its founder, Keshub Chunder Sen, on his visit to England. The famous Tagore family have all been active members of this body, which seeks to find a common basis of religious thought behind Hinduism and Christianity, and indeed behind all spiritual religion under whatever name it is known. Accordingly, in Calcutta I went to see one of its leading personalities Mr. Muzoomdar. We talked together and then he took me to his club of university men. I told them about life at Cambridge and they responded with an account of what they were doing. I was not allowed to depart before I had tasted a great number of Indian sweetmeats, while they sat round watching my face as I ate them, and they then insisted on garlanding me with flowers—a very pretty custom, but rather embarrassing to a somewhat shy and conventional young Englishman!

On January 22, 1898, there was an eclipse of the sun, and the line of totality passed right across India. Ever since I had been disappointed in Vadso in 1896, I had looked forward to the Indian eclipse, and learning that my friend Campbell was going to Sahdol, not very far from the centre of India, to take part in the observations, I decided to join him there. Immediately after the eclipse I wrote home an account of it to my friends in a letter from which I give below the salient extracts.

"There were two parties in the Astronomical camp at Sahdol, first the English party consisting of the Astronomer Royal (Christie), Turner and others, and secondly the Madras party, with Michie Smith, the Government Astronomer, as chief, and several others among whom Campbell was one. It was this party which I joined, and as soon as I was introduced to Michie Smith he said he would like to make use of me during the eclipse as he was rather short of hands.

'During the days which elapsed before the eclipse, we lived a rough-and-tumble sort of life, sleeping in our tents at night under a great pile of blankets, for it was very cold, and wearing thin clothes during the day because of the great heat. The place where we were encamped was in a clearing which had been made right in the middle of the jungle, one day a man brought home a tiger which he had shot less than two miles from the camp!

"We saw something of Christie and Turner, their instruments were special eclipse instruments, and were similar to the ones I had seen in Norway the summer before last. Our instruments, on the other hand, were all general observatory instruments and had to be adapted for eclipse work.



"M. Smith himself used a heliostat which was erected on a mound he had had made, some 15 feet high, which went by the name of 'Mount Sahdol' in the camp. The heliostat reflected the sun down a 40-foot tube and so by means of lenses to an image on a photographic plate. M. Smith and several of the party worked at this; and Campbell was put in charge of another instrument with myself to assist him.

"This instrument consisted of an ordinary equatorial telescope, with an apparatus (at the end, where the eye would usually be placed) for photographic plates. It was Campbell's business to turn the case for the plates round, and call out to me the times of exposure, while I stood on a couple of packing-cases, and did the exposures by taking off and on my straw hat!

"During the days before the eclipse I was given a good many calculations to do, and worked out, from formulae, the times of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th contacts, i.e. the times of commencement of eclipse, commencement of totality, end of totality, and end of eclipse. These times seem to have been verified pretty closely by observation, but they could not be very accurate, as we were not quite certain of our longitude. The totality lasted about 103 seconds; and the whole eclipse began about 0h. 13m. 9s. and ended 3h. 1m. 46s. local time.

"The last day before the eclipse we had several practices of the work we had to do. We found that we had just nice time to get through ten exposures of varying length during the 103 seconds; and during the longer exposures I should have time to look at the eclipse.

"Saturday all was ready; and at about the calculated time the eclipse began in a cloudless sky. During the partial phase I noticed several things the exact opposite of what I saw in Norway; in the first place whereas there the light seemed to remain about the same to within a minute or two of totality and then to get rapidly darker, here the light seemed to get gradually less all the way through; secondly, whereas there the horns of the solar crescent were particularly pointed I noted here that they appeared cut off—no doubt an optical effect.

"It is getting darker, only a few seconds remain to totality.

"'There's Venus!' cries M. Smith.

"'There's the Corona.'

"'Our work begins.'

"'It's all over and it's getting light again.'

"What have we seen? In the first place let me say that our work somewhat interfered with our appreciation of the phenomenon as a whole; but though this had to be borne in mind I am compelled to admit (and I know I am open to the charge of want of artistic sense in saying it) I was disappointed! I think that was probably because I had been led to expect so much. This feeling of mine was shared by a good many of those observers who were seeing an eclipse for the first time.

"To begin with, it never got really very dark. I do not think it was as dark even as totality in Norway; in the second place there was no shadow to be seen; and thirdly there were hardly any colour effects.

"Having said all this, I have probably said too much. We saw the Corona, we saw at least one prominence, and we saw Venus and, I

think, Mars and Mercury The Corona itself is somewhat less tangible or real than one is led to imagine, and looks really much more like the extending rays of the sun which one sometimes sees in England

"Its colour was a sort of milky white, and objects on the earth were a dull slate colour The horizon, or parts of it, appeared to be bright all through the phenomenon, but some people saw cloudlike shadows on distant hills"

After seeing the eclipse of the sun, I visited the famous sites of India—Benares, Lucknow, Delhi and Agra My visit to Delhi was spoilt by the rain, but the grandeur of Benares greatly impressed me and I was spell-bound before the majestic beauty of the Taj at Agra I went up to stay a week with a friend at Roorkee, and while I was there a letter reached me whose envelope addressed simply to F W Lawrence, Madras, bore a score of postmarks, and after following me all over India had at last caught me up It came from Moradabad, some 100 miles only from Roorkee, and invited me to pay the writer a visit there I went for the week-end, and found my old friend H S Rux, now a collector He told me moving stories of what he had had to do during a visitation of plague in his district, and as if to illustrate his description, an Indian woman came in with a child during the narrative, and both, falling on the ground, clasped his knees, calling him 'their father and their mother', and expressed their gratitude for what he had done

From there I went down to Bombay, and taking an Indian coastal steamer reached Mangalore in South Canara, where I was to spend a month with my friend Percy A Booty But I was no sooner there than he took me into 'camp', as he had to do 'Jamabandy', which I soon found out meant a local inspection of the collection of revenue Perhaps the following paragraphs, written at the time in description of camping in India, as it was before the coming of the motor car, may be of interest today

"A man is 'out in camp' whenever he is away from his headquarters, whether he is stopping at a friend's bungalow, in a 'traveller's bungalow', or actually under canvas Now get out of your head all such things as hotels, inns, restaurants, and general shops and you will see that it is necessary to carry your whole house about with you

If you can avoid it you do not travel in the middle of the day, so that marches are of two kinds—morning marches and evening marches

'Booty is to do 'Jamabandy in the Udipi taluk (a taluk is something like a county) So after breakfast his boy and his cook start off with one bullock bandy (covered cart) containing *inter alia* beds and bedding, table and chairs, cooking utensils and most of the European stores, to go to Kota about seven miles off After tea Percy and I drive there in a dog cart, and a little later we dine, play picquet and go to bed In the meantime my boy and Booty's Peons arrive with the rest of the things in another cart.

"After dinner cook and boy start on again eight miles to B——, crossing a ferry on the way and Booty and I proceed in the morning in the dog cart, and stay there all day The next march is to be 15

miles into Purdur, where is the first centre for Jamabandy. We settle to drive first half, and ride, Percy on horse, self on bike, the second half. We make an early start and at the end of seven miles find Booty's horse and my bicycle awaiting us, and so we ride together till within two or three miles of Purdur, and then I determine to ride on ahead to get my bath before Booty turns up. So I go on, and at the end of another mile I notice a man on in front with a horn, and I gradually become aware that he is making a point of keeping in front of me, every now and then he turns round, sees me and hastens on blowing the horn.

"At last I pass him and come upon a conclave of villagers holding up a triumphal arch for me to pass under, the Tasseldar is at their head, all respectfully salaam, the tom-tom beats, the native musicians play their strange harmonies, and so, with every sign of reverent appreciation accompanying me, I pass onwards to the bungalow clad in blue cycling shorts and socks, a flannel shirt and a topi."

I thought at first that they mistook me for the collector, but afterwards I realized that, as the collector's guest, I was no doubt, in their view, equally an object of respectful welcome. I am afraid that as a raw visitor I only saw it as hugely funny, and failed completely even by gesture to make any 'gracious' recognition.

After spending a month altogether with Booty in South Canara, on the West coast, I crossed India again, to finish my broken visit to Campbell in Nellore. He described to me his work on famine relief, and I gave him an account of my journeyings in India since we had met at the eclipse at Sahdol. Geographically I had seen a great deal more of India than he had, or indeed than most Englishmen do who spend their whole lives in the country. But my knowledge was nearly all second-hand and my impressions were mostly superficial. They are certainly not worth recording here. Thirty years were to pass before I visited India again, and five more before, as a member of the Round Table Conference, I was brought into contact with many leading personalities in Indian life. When I come to give an account of these periods of my life I will venture a few tentative opinions on the problems of that country and her many peoples.

With my second visit to Campbell my Indian travels came, in effect, to an end. I went down from Nellore to Madras and, after stopping two nights with Michie Smith, the astronomer, I journeyed on to Tuticorin and from there took boat to Colombo, the port of Ceylon. A short train ride brought me up to the famous botanical gardens at Peradeniya, where I was to stay with the director, an old Cambridge man. His other guest was a boat companion of mine who had come out to investigate the possibility of tapping india-rubber trees for their rubber in a way that would not kill the trees, as had been the case until then. I was shown the giant bamboos in the Gardens—a foot in diameter and 300 feet high—and paid a visit to Kandy, where I saw the ancient Buddhist relics. From there I returned to Colombo and went aboard a ship bound for Australia. My friend, Percy Alden, had come out on it to share the next stage of my travels with me.

There was in those days no Commonwealth of Australia. Each of the States was a separate 'Colony', bound only to the mother country, but federation was already in the air, and a scheme for bringing it about was under discussion. During our stay we attended political meetings where the pros and cons were debated. That particular scheme was subsequently defeated in a referendum, and it was not until a year or two later that the present constitution of the Commonwealth was put forward and accepted. Our time in Australia was brief. We visited the State capitals, spent a week-end in the Blue Mountains, went down a gold-mine at Ballarat, paid a visit to a sheep-station and were duly impressed by the marvellous harbour of Sydney.

We also ran across to the North Island of New Zealand—a four days' voyage each way, but we undertook it as lightheartedly as one would cross the English Channel for a ten days' visit to Paris. In New Zealand the most memorable experience was the long coach drive through the region of geysers and hot springs. Apart from the strangeness of seeing the gushing fountains of boiling water, the sheer beauty of the coloured pools—blue, green, purple, champagne—impressed itself on my mind. It was sad to think that the world-famous 'terraces' had only a few years before been swept away. For the rest, we visited Wellington, Napier and Auckland, learnt something of New Zealand politics, and made the acquaintance of the dignified Maori people.

We recrossed the equator in a Japanese boat, the *Omi Maru*. Traveling slowly inside the 'barrier reef', we had called at Thursday Island and Townsville and should have put in at Manila in the Philippines, but for the Spanish-American War. All we saw of the war, if it can be called 'seeing', was that, though we passed by in the dark, there was no light at Manila. We reached Hong Kong at dawn and were at once struck by the narrow frontage of the land which lies between the hills and the sea. After breakfast we started walking about the town, but it was the height of the summer and, after struggling for some time to keep up, I subsided, very hot and sticky, into a chair carried by coolies. That evening we took the night steamer up the river to Canton.

Waking early, I looked out. The water was alive with little boats and, as I watched, tiny heads came bobbing up through minute hatches, and I discovered that each boat was the home of a family. I was told, later, that the river population at Canton alone ran into hundreds of thousands. Presently a great ship came by whose paddle-wheels were turned by an army of Chinese, treading a revolving staircase and singing a dirge-like chanty. We went ashore and were taken by a guide through the city. The streets were only a few feet across and were often covered in at the top with matting, to keep out the heat of the sun. Lunching on the fifth storey of a pagoda and looking down, I could see nothing but a solid mass of houses, and I estimated that some 2,000,000 people were occupying a space not larger than our city of Derby.

There were endless sights of interest, but the most fascinating to me was the Examination 'Hall', an open space containing several thousands of cells in which candidates for high office were literally bricked in for several days while they wrote their thesis in competition with their fellows.

While I was there, a contest in archery was taking place as part of the examination for military mandarins. Two by two the students in gorgeous robes came forward upon the dais to shoot their three arrows. After inspecting a pawnbroker's shop which ran up 12 or 13 storeys into the sky, we returned to our boat and were back again at Hong Kong next morning.

We spent several days exploring the city and talking with people who knew China well. We went up to the 'Peak' to lunch with friends. But perhaps the most interesting thing we did while there was to visit a Chinese theatre where the actors, all men who live their whole life on the precincts, performed a play in which a young lady falls in love with her brother's tutor. We were told that the dialogue was in the mandarin language and not in the vernacular, but that the audience were so well versed in the plot that the acting without the words would suffice for them. After a week in Hong Kong we went up to Shanghai, where Orient and Occident jostle one another all the time. On the road leading to the foreigners' recreation ground were to be seen Chinese ladies driving in open victorias, men in dog carts and on bicycles, foreigners being pulled along in rickshaws, and Chinese riding in wheelbarrows, the cheapest form of transport in the city.

A missionary guided us through many of the streets. In one of them we heard a plaint of weeping. Drawing near we saw a fire and people sitting round it: a little paper house was being consigned to the flames, then large quantities of paper discs made to imitate silver and copper coins, finally a real suit of clothes. "There has been a death here," said our guide, "and these things are for the use of the dead man." Later he took us to the willow pattern tea-house. Everything was there exactly as it is depicted on our china plates. We crossed the little bridge and almost had to pinch ourselves to make certain we were not dreaming. We went into the house and ordered tea. We were evidently the object of some comment, but our friend did not divulge that he knew Chinese until the proprietor tried to overcharge us, and then he quoted a Chinese proverb: "It is good to skin the foreigner." This brought instant recognition and friendly talk and we were introduced as 'two scholars from England'.

Our visit to China was far too short for my liking, but the hasty impression I formed was most favourable. I admired the refined faces of the men, their golden complexion and their black glossy hair. I admired what I was told on all hands of the honesty of the Chinese merchants. Above all, I was carried away by the beauty of their art. I discovered in myself for the first time an aesthetic response to paintings of scenes of nature—hills and trees, birds and marshes, mists and sunshine. The Chinese artists seemed to me to have succeeded, where so many Westerners fail, in revealing the life spirit which lies behind the external form.

We left Shanghai with regrets and, crossing the narrow ocean, entered Japan by way of Nagasaki and the Inland Sea. I was entranced by the prettiness of everything—the hills, the little rice fields, the temples, the streets of the towns, with the roofs of their cottages nestling in among the trees. As to the people, they seemed to have climbed down out of a picture-book. The children in particular looked like little dolls in their

brilliant-coloured dresses and their hair cut in circular fashion round their heads. Even the coaling of the ship was done by little women in clean and neat clothes, carrying tiny baskets of coal perched on their heads, with their elaborately dressed hair tied up below in loose handkerchiefs.

Japan, as I saw it nearly five-and-forty years ago, still retained a great deal of its ancient life. It was only 30 years since an American warship had broken in on its oriental seclusion and opened it up to Western ideas. Only a few Japanese, mostly men, were wearing European dress, and then only in part. A 'billycock' hat and foreign shoes went oddly with a Japanese vest and kimono and thick white socks. But great factories had already come into existence in which were reproduced many of the horrors of factory life as they were known in England in the middle of last century.

Of these we learnt from a Trade Unionist friend of Percy Alden's when we got to Tokio. But first we devoted ourselves to the sights of Japan. We stayed several days at Kyoto, and visited one of the great temples, vast in its proportions, with its exquisite curved roof resting upon huge columns of unvarnished cedar, said to have been dragged into position with ropes of human hair. We saw the great benign image of Buddha known as the Daibutsu. We travelled to Biwa Lake and came back by the canal which tunnels under a mountain, and were told that this engineering feat had been planned by a student still at college, and that it served the triple purpose of irrigating the fields, conveying cargo, and illuminating the city.

At Nagoya we climbed to the top of a Shogun's castle and looking down on the city saw a parade ground with troops drilling. Enquiring about this I asked the size of the Japanese Army. I received a reply which I wrote home. Here it is: "400,000 strong and our navy is of 300,000 tons, in six years' time we shall be ready to fight the Russians and we shall beat them." That was in August 1898. Punctual to the forecast the Russo-Japanese War began in 1904 and ended in a victory for Japan.

We had expressed a wish to climb to the top of Fujiyama, the 'peerless' mountain which figures in every Japanese picture. But Takagaki, our guide, advised against it, telling us that the going for the last few thousand feet of the climb was most unpleasant. We took his advice, and, instead, walked across neighbouring hills, from which we had an exceptionally fine view of the great cone rising its 12,000 feet from the lowland plain. Once later I saw Fujiyama again in its full magnificence. It was at sunset in Tokio, 70 miles away, and yet there was the noble mountain—its summit high above the horizon—towering up into the sky. No wonder that it has been the object of veneration and worship to the Japanese people from time immemorial!

Another sacred mountain lies close to the Lake of Chusenji. We climbed there in the company of a great band of pilgrims who had come from all over Japan. A few of them were on horseback, attended by gill grooms, but most of them were on foot. They all wore a white kimono, white stockings and a rude straw hat, and they carried a great piece of straw matting, which served in the day to protect their back from the sun, and at night as a bed to lie on. We did not go to the summit ourselves, but we were told that, when the pilgrims got there, they would watch the rising of the sun, and then offer up prayers for themselves and

their village. Their kimono would then be specially stamped by the priest, and they would return to the place whence they came. We felt as if we were taking part in a scene from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

One night we went to the 'Maple Club' to dinner and invited Takagaki to come with us. We had a whole room to ourselves, and the meal was served by five little Japanese damsels who sat on the ground facing us. We had to learn how to sit, how to eat and how to drink in Japanese fashion. The meal went on for hours and we were entertained with music, songs and dances by other Japanese maidens. Takagaki told us that they were all daughters of high-class merchants who were learning the art of entertaining, so as to be ready to please their future husbands when distinguished guests were brought to the house.

Tokio itself we thought a most lovely city and we agreed with the Japanese proverb that no one should say that they have seen 'Ekko' (the beautiful) until they have seen Nekko (the ancient name of the city). Though it had only about the same population as Canton it spread over an area many times as great, and when we climbed to a little eminence and looked down on the city we could see no houses at all but only trees and gardens. Most exquisite of all was the temple, the burial-place of a Shogun, the faultless outline and gorgeous lacquer of which were only matched by the stately avenues of cryptomerias in the enclosure in which it stood.

I should like to be able to end the tale there, but sincerity forbids. Unhappily there was a seamy side to this superficially idyllic life of Japan, and we were told a great deal about it by Percy's friends in Tokio and elsewhere. We learnt of the ruthless exploitation of the workers, particularly of the girls in the newly started factories whose lives were drained of youth and hope in a few short years of grinding labour and poverty. We were confronted with unpleasant facts of cruelty and oppression, which, equally with the happiness and beauty, went to make up the whole life of the nation. A prominent statesman spoke to me of the ease with which Japan could throw an army of 100,000 men into China. The intervening years have shown these tendencies fulfilling themselves in the domestic and imperial life of Japan.

. . .

We travelled from Yokohama, via delightful Honolulu, to San Francisco, still quite a young city with many old wooden shanties in the main streets leaning up against modern skyscrapers. After a brief stay we hurried off to visit the Yosemite Valley and the giant trees of Mariposa Grove, both marvels of sheer magnitude in striking contrast to the pretty miniature landscape of the garden country from which we had just come. We now had to separate, as my friend could not be away longer from his work in East London. But my sister Annie had arranged to join me in Salt Lake City and go with me to the Yellowstone Park. I remember that when I went to the bank to draw out the necessary cash for the trip, it was all handed out to me in twenty-dollar gold pieces, the size of silver dollars, but much heavier! Paper money was almost unknown on the Pacific coast at that time.

I shall not attempt to describe the wonders of the Yellowstone. For five days we were driving through the park seeing the geysers of all sizes,

shapes and periods, and admiring the iridescent pools. One geyser, the giantess, shot up 250 feet into the air at long intervals, another little fellow went off quick-shot-bang every two minutes. At one of the hotels where we stayed the clerk said to us on our arrival 'The bears come down at six and the geyser will play at eight'—for the park is an animal sanctuary as well as a region of hot springs. We got almost weary at last of the wonders and I wrote home irreverently a parody of the famous 'rabbit grace'

Geysers lofty geysers low,  
Geysers rapid geysers slow,  
Geysers gentle geysers rough  
We thank the Lord we've had enough

But they left an indelible impression on my mind

After that I took my sister back to San Francisco and we explored California and travelled across the continent by the Southern Pacific. Avoiding New Orleans, because of an epidemic of yellow fever, we went north to Washington and revisited our friends in the Eastern States with whom we had stayed a few years before. Niagara in snow seemed to me even more imposing than at the height of the summer. New Year's Day (1899) found us on board an Atlantic liner bound for home. My wander-year was over and with it ended my long period of preparation for life. To what purpose should I devote it?

## CHAPTER V

### COURTSHIP

Condition of the people—Mansfield House—Campbell Bannerman—Unionist candidate—Love at first sight—Sister Emmie—The Boer War—A visit to South Africa—Olive Schreiner—Searchings of heart—The concentration camps—An essay on housing—Dunkin professor

DURING the last quarter of the nineteenth century wealth had multiplied enormously in the British Isles. Mass production as we know it today had scarcely begun, but large scale competitive industry working at feverish pressure was turning out an ever increasing stream of commodities. This wealth was abominably distributed. A few 'captains of industry' made great fortunes. Many more of the upper middle class had incomes which enabled them to live in comfort in town and country houses and to travel 'on the Continent'. But at least a third\* of the people lived miserably. They worked long hours. Their food, even when sufficient, was monotonous and of poor quality. Their clothes were generally ill fitting and, from long use, threadbare and dirty. Their houses were in mean streets, badly built, and frequently verminous. Their only rest-days were Sundays, Christmas, and the four annual bank holidays—'Feasts of St. Lubbock' as they were called after their founder. Holidays away from home were quite unknown. Worst of all, they had

\* Chas. Booth's *Life and Labour of the People*, Vol. IX, p. 435



no security Accident, sickness or a spell of unemployment plunged them into dire poverty and debt Old age broke up their homes, and husbands and wives, who had up to then fulfilled their marriage vows to cherish one another, found that the workhouse anticipated death in tearing them apart

There were just a few people who regarded this state of affairs as intolerable They were drawn from all sections of society The bulk of the workers were too submerged to be able to act, or even to think, independently But there were men of vision among them who made a gallant effort, by organizing their fellows industrially, to hew a way out for them from their degradation Leading names were those of Ben Tillett, John Burns, George Barnes, Will Crooks, Bob Smillie and Keir Hardie Outside the ranks of the workers there were Hyndman, William Morris, the artist, and others, who looked to a socialist revolution to put things right, there were religious teachers, like Canon Barnett and Hugh Price Hughes, who sought a Christian solution, there were University men like Arnold Toynbee, and social reformers like Beatrice Potter (afterwards Mrs Sidney Webb), who went among the working people as individuals, and there was Charles Booth, who organized and published a scientific and human study of the facts, under the title, *Life and Labour of the People*

These men and women, all of whom were in deadly earnest, succeeded in arousing a large amount of public interest, and the Press began to take notice When the East London dockers struck for a 'tanner an hour', it was largely public sympathy that won their victory for them Toynbee Hall was founded in East London to be a centre of contact between the classes, and other University settlements sprang up in many parts of London and the country To take an 'interest in the poor' even became fashionable, and to 'go slumming' was the latest craze of the leisured class

Until I came under the influence of Professor Marshall and Percy Alden I had never worried very much about these problems As a Liberal, I wanted greater freedom and wider opportunities of life for everyone, but in the main I accepted the comfortable view that people tended to find their own level, that the best men generally got to the top, that there had been immense improvements since the 'hungry forties', and that, with increasing production, comforts and even luxuries would permeate down to all strata of society Marshall stimulated my brain to ascertain the facts Alden forced me to face them and, if I could, to justify them

It had been easy in the academic atmosphere of Cambridge to regard the class structure of society as natural, and the variations in incomes as a stimulus to effort, but even on my first visit to Canning Town I found some difficulty in explaining to a little knot of thoughtful working men just why I and my associates should be able to have all the opportunities which they and theirs were denied Like Alice trying to repeat her nursery poems to the caterpillar, somehow the words seemed to come out all wrong!

Before I went round the world, Percy Alden had invited me on my return to come and live with him and his friends in Canning Town, and to collect information of the conditions in that area, so as to write a companion volume to Charles Booth's book, which was confined to London

west of the River Lea I accepted his invitation I tenanted rooms in the newly built Residence in the Barking Road I bought a large-scale map of the district which I hung on the wall of my sitting-room I spent many days as a preliminary, tramping or cycling through the streets But I never got any further with the work of the survey The fact was that I was pressed into so many of the activities of the Settlement itself that I had no time left to organize and carry through the original project

I became Treasurer of the Settlement and revised the system of its finances In this capacity I took charge of the 'Wave' lodging-house, a venture designed to provide for 6d a night decent accommodation for sailors and homeless dockers in the Victoria Docks area I tried the experiment of sleeping there myself in the common dormitory I ran the men's club and presented them with a billiard table, and started the practice, which I kept up for many years, of playing an exhibition match with the winner of the annual tournament I built a cement lawn tennis court for the recreation of the residents of the Settlement and I remember Brame Hillyard coming there to give me a game

As I was reading for the Bar, I sometimes sat as assistant Poor Man's Lawyer, and listened to strange tales of marital infidelity, landlords' rapacity and neighbours' defamation I remember on one occasion being visited by a young woman and an older relative who startled me by saying straight away, "This young person wants to know whether she can marry her uncle" When I gave a negative response, they wanted to know precisely what would be the consequences if she defied the prohibition

I initiated a series of 'At Homes' in the Residence, and I personally carried the invitations to the householders of nearby streets A fair number used to turn up We had conversation, light refreshments, games such as musical chairs (which soon broke the ice of aloofness) and then a musical programme provided by friends, who came specially from London to entertain us I made the surprising discovery that at least as large a proportion of these 'uncultured' folk as of an 'educated' West End audience appreciated really good music, and those to whom it meant nothing had the good manners not to interrupt the proceedings by chatter and whisperings

The same truth was borne in upon me by the enormous numbers who went through the turnstiles into the West Ham Public Hall when a free picture exhibition was given there I made it my business to gather a group of visitors round me and point out to them the most famous exhibits As a rule great interest was shown, but occasionally I got some funny rejoinders I had been explaining a picture of Perseus and Andromeda. "But for my part," said one of my party, "I do not care for the nude" I shut up like a pricked balloon On another occasion we were passing Holman Hunt's 'The Triumph of the Innocents' It will be remembered that it portrays Joseph and Mary and the infant Jesus, whose fancy is caught by the phantom figures of the innocents who had died at the hands of Herod "All I can say," said a bystander who had imbibed freely, 'if all those are his children he had a very large family'

I found human nature very much the same among my new acquaintances as among the set in which I had been brought up, but virtue and vice took different forms I had been accustomed to hear the 'criminal' classes spoken of as if they were a part of the working class I found that

in Canning Town the criminal class meant essentially a section of rich, who exploited the workers in industry, who rack-rented them in slums, and whose names frequently appeared in Divorce Court proceedings, which in those days were reported in full detail in the Press.

I began to come into personal contact with labour leaders whom had heard denounced as 'agitators'. Every Sunday at the corner of Beckton Road, Will Thorne, the secretary of the gasworkers, a throng of workers with great vigour Ben Tillett had dinner at the Residence with us before addressing the PSA. He spoke to us of his passionate love of London and its river, and of the delight he had in listening to good music. One evening a gentle quiet man dropped in to have a word with Alden about some down-and-out acquaintance whom he wished to befriend. I was introduced to him and learnt that he was the 'dangerous fire brand', Keir Hardie.

An event in the Settlement was the marriage of Percy Alden to Dr Margaret Pearce, the head of the Women's Medical Mission in Canning Town. The ceremony itself was a simple one, with few guests, but the Public Hall was taken for a great reception a few days later. I was put in charge of the arrangements. I invited all the people connected with any of the men's and women's institutions to come, and to bring a friend each. On adding up the lists I found that about 2000 people might be expected. I entrusted the catering to some of the women, and I myself planned that the guests as they came in should shake hands and have a word with Mr and Mrs Alden. Shortly before the ceremony I began to have qualms. I enquired how many helpers there were for the refreshments. 'Some 15 or 20,' I was told. I realized that that was less than two helpers per 100 guests. The reception began. Of course it was physically impossible in an hour and a half for them all to be greeted individually by the hosts. The crowd waiting outside grew more and more impatient. Most of them never got in at all that night, and the reception had to be repeated on another evening with better arrangements. I had let the Aldens down badly and was duly penitent. But the lesson thus learnt was of the greatest value to me later on when I had to deal with still larger numbers in the suffragette agitation.

One day, a conference was held at Mansfield House between a number of prominent Trade Unionists and Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, who was then leading the Liberal Party. They told him that they desired a much larger representation of Labour in the House of Commons and asked him whether he could arrange that, in a proportion of constituencies, Trade Union leaders should be selected as Liberal candidates. He said that personally he would much like to see this come about, but he was 'only the leader of the Liberal Party', and that he could not impose his will on the constituencies. I remember thinking at the time that this was a very weak answer. But it was at least an honest one and did not arouse false hopes. I have no doubt it played an important part in determining Labour to form a party of its own, independent both of Liberals and Conservatives.

My family tradition had been Liberal but, when the split came in the Party in 1885 over Home Rule, it was only my brother who continued to support Gladstone, my three uncles fell in behind Joseph Chamberlain, the radical, in opposition to the proposal. As a boy, devoted to my

Uncle Edwin, I naturally accepted his outlook and like him called myself a Liberal-Unionist. When in 1894 a Coalition Government was formed of Conservatives and Liberal-Unionists, Chamberlain took high office, and a scheme of workmen's compensation and several other progressive measures found their way to the Statute Book. My uncle had himself secured a seat in that Parliament for the Truro-Helston division of Cornwall and he now proposed to me that I also should stand at the next election as a Liberal Unionist. I was favourably disposed towards a political career, and I fell in with his suggestion. Accordingly I went before the selection committee of North Lambeth, and was chosen as the candidate for that constituency.

But destiny had quite other plans for me than those of my uncle. One afternoon I was told that there was to be an amateur theatrical entertainment that evening at the Mansfield Hall which adjoined the men's club. This was to be provided by some working girls from West-Central London. I was to await 'Sister Mary' and 'Sister Emmie', who were in charge of the party, at the Residence and take them on to the Hall where *arrangements would have been made for the entertainment*. I enquired who these 'sisters' were, but could glean little information. I did as I had been told, but when I arrived at the Hall I found that arrangements had not been made, and I had to do the best I could in the circumstances. I also helped in the wings of the stage, and provided my own coat as a substitute for a 'property' that was missing. As the play was ending, I discovered that no provision had been made for the party to have any refreshments, so I dashed home and improvised a supper and served it myself. Then I walked up to the station with 'Sister Emmie' and saw them all off.

There was nothing particularly unusual about all this externally. But inwardly I found that something unaccountable had happened to me. It was love at first sight! From that moment everything seemed changed. All the ordinary routine of my life went on as before, but it was merely the foreground to a new experience which lay behind. I learnt from Percy Alden that Mary Neal and Emmeline Pethick had been two of the Sisters of the West London Mission, but that they had separated from it and set up an informal settlement of their own, and were assisted by one or two other men and women. Beyond that, I could ascertain nothing about them. Accordingly, I made occasion for two or three further opportunities of seeing them, and then, fearful lest I might be forestalled by some other suitor with readier access, I procured a special appointment on some pretext with 'Sister Emmie', called at her flat and made my proposal.

Readers will not expect me to let them into the secret of all that passed at that interview, but they will not be surprised to be told that everything did not proceed quite so simply as an ingenuous young man had pictured to himself. Emmeline Pethick, as all the world was to come to know later, was a woman of deep spiritual feeling. She had dedicated herself to social service, and, while she had no prejudice against marriage, she saw with unerring judgment that neither she nor her mate could ever be really happy, if the yoke by which they were united chafed in such a way as to prevent fulfilment of the complete personality of either. In particular, she posed the question whether she, a rebel at heart against

the existing order, could be a suitable helpmeet for a Member of Parliament owing allegiance to one of the traditional parties

Though it went against my immediate suit, my instinct told me that she was right, and thenceforward we set out to discover, sometimes separately and sometimes in concert, whether we had that fundamental unity of outlook that would make marriage a source of enrichment to us both. This unusual quest may bring a smile to some of my readers but we were two young people who took life seriously. We could not then foresee the many strange paths into which life would afterwards lead us, but looking back today I realize how grievous would have been the strain on our relationship if this essential unity between us had not existed.

Among other things which I investigated was the whole question of the Boer War, which was then raging in South Africa. Many years before, a section of the Boer people, disliking British domination, had trekked into the interior and at the Battle of Majuba had won a victory over British troops. Mr Gladstone had agreed to a compromise peace, which left the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State outside British control. For a time each race had lived its own life and pursued its own civilization. But the discovery of the rich goldfields of the Rand had brought British and Boer again into direct contact. The Jameson Raid had inflamed passions, and the long correspondence between Joseph Chamberlain and Paul Kruger, President of the Transvaal Republic, had ended in war.

Three separate questions I had to answer to myself. First, was the war an issue of sufficient importance to oblige me to form an opinion upon it? As a would be M.P., I could only answer Yes. Secondly, was the British case a good one? I spent laborious days and nights reading the Blue Book, and came to the conclusion that it was not. Thirdly, could I, holding this view, remain a candidate supporting the Government? I decided that it was impossible. I told my uncle of my decision and he, cancelling in a hurry a visit to his constituency, came and discussed it all with me. He suggested that I had read the Blue Book like a mathematical treatise without fully appreciating the underlying human realities. The upshot was that I went out at his suggestion to South Africa to see the situation for myself.

The Cape Colony, as I found it, was in a very delicate position. There was a violent cleavage of opinion about the war. Naturally it was largely on racial lines. But there were exceptions. John X. Merriman, the Englishman, opposed the British action. Some Dutchmen laid the principal blame on the obstinacy of Paul Kruger. There were divisions even inside families. W. P. Schreiner, though disagreeing with Chamberlain's policy, had considered it his duty, as Prime Minister of a British Colony, to allow British troops free passage through Cape territory. His sister Olive, the famous writer, was a passionate opponent of the war and was deeply grieved at her brother's action. Feelings in the Colony ran so high that it seemed at one time that civil war might break out.

I interviewed statesmen, editors of newspapers, and ministers of religion. I mingled with exiles from the Rand. I learnt a number of facts about the various races—British, Dutch, Kaffirs and coloured people, and about their relations with one another. I found that many of the

'reasons' for the war, put forward at home, were not taken very seriously in South Africa. Though 'Oom Paul' was undoubtedly an obstinate old man who had no intention of letting the Rand mineowners have it all their own way, the idea that the Uitlanders were an oppressed people was a myth. Ill-treatment of the natives was not confined to one white race, and liberal opinion, both British and Dutch in the Cape Colony and elsewhere, was opposed to it.

The one justification for the war, if it could be so called, was that, as between British and Boer, one race had got to be 'top dog', and that the sooner it could be settled which it was to be, the sooner would South Africa be able to get on with its own development under one flag, speaking one language and adhering to one civilization. Even if true, this hardly seemed a sufficient excuse for plunging a subcontinent into an internecine struggle. But there was considerable evidence, even then, that it was false. In the Cape, before the war, British and Dutch were intermarrying, the English language was supplanting the 'Taal', and liberal ideas were gaining ground. Other parts of South Africa were moving in a similar direction. In the Transvaal itself there were many Boers who were opposed to the conservative ideas of Paul Kruger, and he was an old man who was not likely to remain long an obstacle to change. The war was reversing all these tendencies. Today is there anyone who knows South Africa who will maintain that the Boer War settled the question of supremacy, or that it made the country unilingual or brought race-peace?

I did not devote all the time of my visit to political enquiry. I hired a bicycle and rode out frequently to see the green waves at Sea Point. I spent many an evening with Olive Schreiner and her husband Cronwright, and we were often joined by Cartwright of the *South African News* and J. M. Robertson who, like myself, was on a visit to the Cape. Many were the discussions we had on religious and social questions. The lighter side was also not forgotten, and I remember in particular a famous 35-mile drive we all had round Table Mountain in a wagonette drawn by three horses driven by a Malay coachman wearing an enormous straw hat.

I returned to England with my mind quite made up. My visit to South Africa had only served to strengthen my determination to abandon my candidature, and my decision was announced to the organizers of the Unionist Party. There was some talk of my having an interview with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain himself but in the end nothing came of it. It was then suggested that, in the interests of the Party, my retirement should be attributed to some cause other than the war. This I refused to allow. I was, of course, a person of no political standing, and my defection and classification as a 'pro-Boer' was of no importance except to myself and to my immediate circle.

My attitude to the war had not been the only question which I had examined afresh in the course of my quest. I felt it incumbent upon me to come to a conclusion on my general attitude to the order of society in which I lived. I read many books and drew great inspiration from the writings of Mazzini. One passage\* remains most vividly in my memory

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\* Vol. VI, *Life and Writings of Joseph Mazzini: Critical and Literary*

It runs

Life is one the individual and society are its two necessary manifestations, life considered singly, and life in relation to others  
Flames kindled upon a common altar, they approach each other in rising, until they mingle together in God "

Another book, *Commerce and Christianity*, interested me deeply The following words seem prophetic

"You have been accumulating a superabundance of capital, and you have been inventing and discovering new powers of production, which, to the early days of our grandfathers, would have been magical and uncanny As the direct result of all this, the coming century is about to pour down upon you a deluge of wealth which, if I did not believe that there is a God above whose purpose is to prevent it, I should say threatens to bring down civilization itself "

In this field I had no immediate objective decision to take, but I moved appreciably to the left without specifically becoming a socialist

Once questionings begin, and the mind is given free rein to play on them, it is not very easy to limit the scope I passed, by natural sequence, to man's whole place in the universe, and in the course of that to his right to exploit the lower creation for his own ends I asked myself "Must one really take life, in order oneself to live?" I remember discussing this with Olive Schreiner She said that at one time she had herself faced this question and tried to meet it by becoming a vegetarian Her health had suffered and she had given it up She had come to the conclusion that the law that life lives on life must be accepted but that she could only justify her own part in it if she was prepared in her turn to give her life if need be to something higher than herself Profound as was this answer, I was not wholly convinced by it, and I determined to give vegetarianism a trial in my own person I further debated the whole question of absolute non resistance I shall return to these questions later

It is perhaps not altogether surprising that, in the midst of all this Emmeline Pethick and I did not readily and at once come back to the precise point from which we had set out For my part I had subjected myself to what was almost a form of auto psychoanalysis I had read early and late, and lost my power of sleep In place of my natural buoyancy I had become subject to fits of depression The tide of life had gone out It had to come in again before we could resume our courtship where it had been broken off

I remember that I was walking home one night feeling utterly depressed criticizing myself unsparingly, and regretting that I had lacked that quiet strength in which alone difficult crises find solution Suddenly the thought came to me that even now, when everything seemed to have gone wrong an inner calm was my only salvation I have used the ordinary words the thought came to me but at the time I was convinced that it was a message of which my consciousness was being made

aware Who can say whence thoughts come? The wisest of us and the most foolish are alike assailed by them Sometimes they carry profound truth, sometimes they suggest folly or wickedness Often they are mere 'will-o'-the-wisps' My thought that night, whatever its origin, had a profound influence on my life

It was fortunate for me that several pieces of interesting and constructive work opened out to me at that time I came in contact with Miss Emuly Hobhouse, who had been deeply moved by the condition of the concentration camps in South Africa, in which the Boer women and their children had been interned by the British in the course of over-running the country She desired to raise a fund in Britain to effect improvements, and an organization, called the South African Women's and Children's Distress Fund, was formed of which I became hon secretary, the Dowager Lady Farrer treasurer, and Lady Courtney, if I remember rightly, the chairman Emuly Hobhouse herself represented the fund in South Africa and visited the camps to distribute it Further, as a result of her representations, many changes were made, and the high death-rate was greatly reduced

It is always a matter of doubt how far a national minority, who disapprove of a war waged by their own country, are justified or wise in carrying on propaganda against it while the war is in progress and feeling is running high But whatever criticism may be levelled against other activities of the 'pro-Boers', no legitimate exception can be taken to the South African Women's and Children's Distress Fund It was in no sense defeatist, nor did it weaken the war effort The bad condition of the camps was not a deliberate attempt at frightfulness by the British, but a failure of proper organization, paralleled by equal failure in our own soldiers' camps and hospitals in South Africa The removal of the worst defects probably helped the Dutch in the Cape to remain loyal at the time to the British connection, and when the war was over lessened the bitterness against Britain Today the name of Em. J. Hobhouse, the Englishwoman, is held in equal honour by the Dutch with heroes of their own race

About this time, too, several Cambridge men decided to publish a symposium dealing with current social problems. C F G Masterman originated the idea and edited the book which was called *The Heart of the Empire* Among the other contributors were Pigou, Reginald Bray, Noel Buxton, G P Gooch and G M Trevelyan I was asked to do the article on housing Hitherto, people who had written on that subject had dealt mainly with the question of pulling down slums and building 'model workmen's dwellings' on the sites I developed a new line Taking London as my main example I divided it into belts—the City, Inner London, Outer London, and the Suburbs—and I showed how in the course of the nineteenth century the populations of most of the inner parts had actually declined while the great increase was confined to the outer rings Therefore, I concluded, the solution of the problem lay not at the centre but at the circumference, and I cited the planning of Hendon, Harrow, Woodford, East Ham, Barking and the suburbs of the south as the real essence of housing reform Of course others beside myself had been turning their attention to town planning, and when a few years later Parliament took the matter up and a Committee sat to hear evidence, one of the witnesses, taking my successive rings as his basis, brought my figures up



to date in order to press the same conclusion as mine. Ultimately the Town Planning Act developed the idea and gave it legislative sanction.

I had also accepted an invitation from Manchester College, Oxford, to be 'Dunkin' professor for the year and, as such, to deliver a weekly lecture on economics. In the first two terms I devoted myself to orthodox political economy, but in the third I took as my subject the social problems of the day, using as my textbook Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People*, to which I have already made reference. For this third course I circulated throughout the University an advance syllabus, and was agreeably surprised at having a crowded lecture room of men and women who continued coming regularly, even in Eights Week when the boat races were actually in progress. Included among these was Lees Smith, afterwards to become my colleague and leader in the House of Commons. I remember that my last lecture was on socialism and that I could not make up my mind beforehand whether I would come out for it or against it. Faced with my audience, I told them that socialism in some shape was inevitable, and that the important thing was to ensure that when it came it should take a good form.

Finally, at the invitation of friends, I undertook financial responsibility for the London evening newspaper, the *Echo*, and took over active control of its management and policy. This great task was to absorb my energies and my resources for several years to come, and I will reserve the story of it for the next chapter. But indirectly it affected my life on the personal side, as I will now relate.

Up till then I had had little experience of business or journalism, and these I had to learn by myself with the assistance of the staff of the paper. But in the matter of policy I decided to avail myself of the help of my friends, and I gathered round me a little circle, to plan out with me how best we could utilize the platform which the control of a daily organ of opinion provided. This little informal committee met once a week in a small office in the City in Bread Street, which had been the birthplace of one of my uncles, and which was still the centre of the control of the Lawrence-family property.

I do not remember the names of all those who came to assist me in this work. But there was one who had accepted my invitation who brought with her to our deliberations deep human insight and practical common sense. She brought also two eyes whose glance penetrated to my inmost being. Emmeline Pethick and I met once more, not only on the committee but at the girls' club of which she was president. She took me again to the tiny flat in Somerset Terrace, close to St Pancras Church, where I had made her my original proposal, and the fires of our love for one another that had lain dormant blazed out afresh and illumined our lives.

In the outside world the frosts and bitter winds of winter had gone and the ever-recurring miracle of the spring was being re-enacted. In our hearts on that day in May 1901 the equal miracle of human love was manifested to us with its rich pageantry of light and joy. Thenceforward we knew that we belonged to one another. We knew that whatever gifts we each had were no longer separately our own but were part of our common possession. The full tide of life had returned. And thus we plighted our troth.

## CHAPTER VI

## JOURNALISM

Control of the *Echo*—Distinguished contributors—Henry Pethick—The *Esperance* Club—The Boer War—A family breach—An unusual wedding—Pett Ridge—T P O Connor—Chinese labour—Lloyd George—H N Brailsford—Birth of the Labour Party—Ramsay MacDonald—Colonel Creswell—W T Stead—*The Reformers Year Book*—*The Labour Record and Review*—Keir Hardie—A visit to Egypt—The *Echo* ceases publication

THE *Echo* had been founded in the late sixties of the nineteenth century by Passmore Edwards and was the first halfpenny evening paper in London. Its progressive outlook and literary flavour had secured it a regular sale amongst thoughtful radicals, and it had been for many years a good paying property. But it had not kept pace with the times, and several newcomers had latterly gone ahead of it in popularity and circulation.

As Treasurer of Mansfield House I had met Passmore Edwards in connection with one of his many benefactions, but it was not from him that I acquired my interest in the paper. A few years previously he had disposed of it to some Liberal politicians, of whom the most prominent were Thomas Lough, M P for Islington, and John Barker, of Kensington, who had turned it into a company. It was my old friend F W Hirst who came to see me about it. He said the paper was in low water, and he was anxious that it should not pass into the hands of the imperialist section of the Party. I expressed interest, and he took me to see the prime mover in the matter—David Lloyd George—then a prominent pro-Boer politician and senior partner in a firm of solicitors.

From him I learnt that the investment of a few thousand pounds in the company would not only secure immediate control, but would suffice to finance the *Echo* for several months ahead. Thus for a sum, insignificant compared with the cost of starting a new paper, I could 'have a run' with an existing organ possessing an established circulation. If at the end of the period the paper had not turned the corner the situation could be reviewed afresh. It was an attractive proposition for a man who held strong political views and I accepted it. Part of the capital was put up by some of my friends, the rest I found myself.

The agreement signed, I went to the offices in St Bride Street and was introduced to the staff. There was no regular editor, but J L Hammond was temporarily writing the leading articles. I went down into the machine room, and saw the great rotary machines printing and counting the papers. I was handed a copy for myself, and felt rather like the little girl who, when given a glass of milk straight from the cow, expostulated that she was used to having it from a 'nice clean can'. In later years I was often in the machine room, and the roaring monsters always fascinated me. I remember one of them, in particular, which had its well-behaved days and its naughty days. Sometimes it would print, fold and count the papers in a most seemly fashion. At other times it would tear them and throw them all about the floor, I never could account for these fits of ill-temper unless perhaps it was the weather or the texture of the paper.

The day after my first visit was Budget day in the House of Commons, and at Hirst's suggestion I issued a specially late edition of the paper with a verbatim report of the Budget speech. It did not have a large sale, as most of the buying public had already gone home. But it so happened that an advertiser, wishing late in the evening to place a topical advertisement for next day, found our office unexpectedly open and gave it to us, thus more than paying for the cost of the extra edition.

If I had had more experience of journalism I should have devoted myself first and foremost to news and circulation, and to that end I ought to have scoured Fleet Street for the best news editor and the best circulation manager that could be found. But my interest was centred on the political side. I induced Percy Alden to become editor, H. N. Brailsford to write the leading articles and J. Ramsay MacDonald to contribute the Labour notes, but the other key posts were left to less distinguished men. I myself became Chairman of the company and Managing Director.

When I had been in control about two months, I issued a special number setting out the aims and policy of the new proprietors. We stood for conciliation in foreign policy, civil liberty at home and in the Empire, social reform irrespective of Party, and the interests of labour as against the 'tyranny of organized capital'. I published a number of messages of support from distinguished men and women in all walks of life. Keir Hardie wrote "The trouble with the Press is that every question is viewed from the Party standpoint. An outspoken organ of social reform is needed." Lloyd George sent "All efforts for the improvement of the conditions of the people must be vain unless peace prevails." James Bryce said "Had the Press presented the facts relating to South Africa fully and fairly to the people they never would have suffered the Ministry to involve us in a needless and disastrous war." Herbert Spencer wrote "After nearly two thousand years of preaching of the religion of amity the religion of enmity remains predominant throughout Europe." Other contributions came from Leonard Courtney, Dr. Clifford, Frederic Harrison, Canon Barnett, Canon Scott Holland and Mark Twain. Mrs. Humphry Ward bade us not to 'let London forget the sweated trades'.

Shortly before this I had become engaged, and I lost no time in paying a visit to Emmeline's people in Weston super-Mare. They admitted me at once to the family circle. It was a large one. I found I was to have a new father and mother, seven new brothers and sisters, numerous uncles and aunts and no less than 50 first cousins! From one and all, as I came to know them, I received the most wonderful welcome. Henry Pethick took me down to the offices of the *Weston super-Mare Gazette*, which he owned, and introduced me as his 'son-in-law elect'. I started by being very respectful to him and deferred to his opinions even when they differed from my own. But he would have none of it. "Why does he always agree with me?" he said to his daughter. "I would much rather he treated me as an equal and held his own ground in argument." I readily took the hint and we were the best of friends up to the day of his death.

In June, Emmeline and her friend Mary Neal took some of the tiny children of their *Espérance Girls' Club* to stay at Broadmoor, near Dorking, where Mrs. Brook generously placed two of her cottages at their disposal. I joined the party at the week-end and had my first intro-

duction to this lovely part of Surrey, not far from which we have ever since made our country home Emmeline and I walked together up Leith Hill, visited Coldharbour and bathed the children in the lake at Friday Street Later, I went with her to Littlehampton, where the elder girls of the Espérance Club were having their country holiday, I made a maze for them on the sea-shore at ebb tide In after years this club was to become famous for the part it played, under the able superintendence of Mary Neal, in the revival of the old English folk songs and Morris dances all over the country

In the greater world, the South African War was running its course, and John X. Merriman, the Englishman, and Sauer, the Dutchman, came over from the Cape to explain in England the facts about the situation, and plead for a conciliatory settlement My name was associated with their activities, and my Uncle Edwin, who regarded it all as 'defeatism', decided that the time had come to make a clean cut in the relationship between us At his request I went to see him Each of us understood and respected the sincerity of the other far too well to quarrel about the matter, or to attempt to alter the other's settled convictions In future, our political paths were to be diametrically apart and social separation was in my uncle's view a necessary concomitant

About the same time, Miss Emily Hobhouse found her health did not permit her to continue her active work, and I, as secretary of the South African Women's and Children's Distress Fund, had to find a successor to carry it on I invited one of the applicants for the position to discuss it over a cup of tea at my fiancée's flat After the meal I was just about to light a cigarette when I thought it only polite tentatively to offer one to her Emmeline, seeing her look of embarrassment, said, "He means to ask if he may smoke," and on her replying, "I don't mind if the window is open," I decided not to smoke myself I thought no more of the incident and fixed up the appointment

A few days later, however, my assistant secretary received a letter from the young lady declining the task because of my inviting her to smoke She had never been so insulted before in her life, she said, even by rough men in the wilds She had thought to go to South Africa to do God's service, but since the 'cigarette incident' she had come to the conclusion that 'the blessing of God can never rest on any work with which he is in any way connected' My assistant secretary thought that I should be upset by this letter I confess I saw another side to it! It is difficult today to realize that this could have happened only 40 years ago!

Emmeline and I were to be married in October We decided to have a simple flat in London for our workaday life and a small house in the country for week-ends We were fortunate in our house-hunting Our very first visit was to Clement's Inn, which had recently been rebuilt for offices and flats We found exactly what we wanted there, and it was our London home for nearly 17 years It had a romance of its own, for while the front faced the new Law Courts, it backed on Old Wych Street and a labyrinth of old London streets already in process of demolition to form Aldwych and Kingsway We little suspected then that we should add to its romance, and that it would be pointed out to future London visitors as the 'place where the suffragettes lived' In the country, too, our first 'order to view' was for a charming house built by

Lutyens at The Holmwood It overlooked the village cricket ground, and at the back lay the friendly slopes of Leith Hill and the Coldharbour woods It caught our fancy and we closed with the offer at once

We decided on a somewhat unusual wedding We wanted *all* our friends to be there, and 'all' included, in addition to our relatives and political and social fellow workers, the men of the Mansfield House Men's Club and the old ladies of the St Pancras workhouse, whom *Emmeline* was in the habit of visiting every week The ceremony was performed by Percy Alden, Mark Guy Pearce and the Unitarian Minister of my family chapel, and it took place in the Canning Town Public Hall As this was not licensed for marriages we had the legal wedding in advance in the St Pancras registry office—'short but binding' as the registrar said We chartered a special train to Canning Town to bring the London guests Everybody enjoyed the day, including, of course, the bride and bridegroom, and people wrote afterwards recalling the 'sunny' day, which in fact had been overcast with cloud

We spent a week of our holiday at the Abinger Hatch Hotel, from which we could walk over to the Mascot, our house at Holmwood, and another week in the New Forest, and then came back to our work in London The *Echo* had not turned the corner But the idea of throwing it up after getting it going on new lines was unthinkable, so new capital had to be found Again I provided the bulk of it, but my sister Carry and H J Wilson, Liberal M P for Holmfirth, provided handsome sums and took up shares

Among special contributors to the paper on its literary side was Pett Ridge, who wrote a short story for us every week He had already made a name for himself with *Maud Em'ly* and other books in which he reproduced the quintessence of cockney wit He did not keep all his humour for his writings, and I remember a story he told me about the little servant-girl who worked in the house in which he lived She had described to him a talk she had had with some other girls of her acquaintance who had asked her if she had a sweetheart and told her how they 'take you out in the evening and pay for your bus fare, your supper and your seat at the halls' "When I come to think of it," she said, "I see'd it must be a great save"

I tried to get T P O Connor to write for the paper but we did not succeed in coming to an arrangement Instead, he invited me to dine with him at the House of Commons and laid before me a scheme for one of his new ventures—*T P's Weekly* I think it was—and asked me to provide the capital to float it He was then in his prime, brimful of vitality, with an unsurpassed knowledge of the ways of the world and an almost uncanny flair for journalism I spent a most pleasant evening but I did not respond to his speculative proposal Perhaps, if I had done so, I might have recouped myself for some of my loss on the *Echo*

In 1902 hostilities in South Africa were brought to an end by the peace of Vereeniging Originally unconditional surrender had been demanded, but better counsels prevailed, and Kitchener was allowed to negotiate a 'soldiers' settlement' with the Boer generals It was further modified later by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman But memories are long among the Afrikaner people, and all the statecraft of Botha and Smuts (both of

whom fought against us as Generals in the war) have not succeeded in reconciling a large and influential section of them to the British connection

One of the immediate consequences of the British victory was that the mineowners were given a free hand in the Transvaal gold-mines. They used it to introduce Chinese labour. The men were recruited under contract in China, and, leaving all their womenfolk behind, were brought over in immense numbers to the Rand, where they were confined in special compounds. The system had grave inherent objections and was open to most serious abuse. The *Echo* took a leading part in denouncing it, and its attitude was supported by most of the Liberal press and by a growing body of public opinion.

Another sequel to the war was the visit paid by Joseph Chamberlain in person to South Africa. It is possible that, seeing things for himself on the spot, he formed a different opinion concerning the wisdom of his previous policy. Be that as it may, on his return he started off on an entirely new campaign. Years before, Disraeli had declared that Protection was 'not only dead but damned'. Chamberlain revived it under the title of 'Tariff Reform' and gave it an imperial setting. Great debate followed in Parliament, in the Press, and throughout the country. The *Echo* took up the cudgels vigorously on behalf of Free Trade. In addition, I wrote a pamphlet on the subject, and sent it to several prominent men, including Asquith. In acknowledging it he wrote, for me to publish, a few sentences expressing his agreement. I followed the same course with a pamphlet on Chinese labour, but this time I got no reply.

Mr Lloyd George warmly supported my attitude on both questions and promised to send me messages for publication. When one of them was not forthcoming, I 'phoned him and he told me to write something myself and put his name to it. In addition to political advice he gave me the benefit of his agile mind in his capacity as solicitor to the company. Sometimes my wife and I had the pleasure of entertaining him at our flat in Clement's Inn. I remember on one occasion he was lamenting the fact that religious services had ceased to be well attended and asked from what other source, if any, the people of London could obtain moral instruction. "From many of the East End theatres," my wife replied. He was incredulous and seemed almost shocked. "Name your own day," she said, 'come to dinner with us and we will take you to a theatre at random.' He chose the date and the theatre was fixed up. Unfortunately at the last minute he could not come and we went alone. The play was one long sermon on the evils of gambling!

Percy Alden did not remain editor of the *Echo* for more than some 18 months and when he resigned I took on the editorship myself. This brought me to the office about seven o'clock every morning. After reading all the London papers, I waited for the arrival of Brailsford to settle the leading articles for the day's issue. He generally arrived a little late and somewhat hot and bothered, having bicycled from his home in Hampstead. But when once the subjects had been agreed upon, he was a consummate master of his craft. Sharpening his pencil with a small razor, which he kept unsheathed in his waistcoat pocket, he proceeded to write, with incredible rapidity, faultless English and inexorable logic. In three-quarters of an hour he could write both the main leader of some

700 words and a 'short' of 250 words more. In another half hour he had corrected the proofs and was on his way home again.

In 1900, at the instigation of Keir Hardie, the Labour Representation Committee' had been formed by the federation for political purposes of the Trade Unions and the Socialist Societies—the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation and the Fabian Society. In 1903 the Newcastle resolution was passed, binding independence of other political parties on all candidates standing under the aegis of the Committee. Brailsford and I at once saw the epoch making character of this decision, which later brought the Labour Party into being. He wrote a leader for the *Echo* welcoming the new decision. Not very graciously this support was referred to later in an article in a Labour publication which said that the Press of London, with one insignificant exception', had shown its hostility.

Brailsford went away for some months in 1903 to go to Macedonia to distribute relief. A year or two earlier he had himself been fighting for the Greeks in their war. While he was away the leading articles in the *Echo* were generally written by McCallum Scott, who afterwards sat as Liberal M.P. for Bridgeton, and who was later killed in an aeroplane accident in British Columbia. But occasionally they were written by the contributor of the weekly Labour notes—James Ramsay MacDonald. He and his wife, Margaret, were living at that time in a flat in the tall block on the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields, close to where the memorial to her now stands. At this flat, when it was crowded out at one of their regular At Homes, one was sure of meeting most of the notables in the socialist world.

The MacDonalds came and stayed a week-end with us at our country house in Holmwood, and brought their family with them, including Malcolm, who was then an infant in arms. Mrs. MacDonald was a woman of remarkable singleness of character, and her approach to questions was always direct and straightforward. I remember being struck by her absence of sentimentality when I was getting the facts from her for the character sketch I wrote of her husband in *The Labour Record and Review*. I remember, too, a talk which I had with him many years later in the House of Commons, in the course of which he suddenly and unexpectedly confessed to me that everything had been different with him since the day of her death.

wanted to get certain facts across about Chinese labour, he said that the papers in whose columns he usually wrote were closed to him, and asked me to help him. Every now and again he interrupted his story and request to tell me how thoroughly he disapproved of my misguided attitude on the Boer War. This unusual method of approach won my heart, for I reflected that only a man of complete sincerity would have adopted it. He carried me off to lunch with him in Park Lane and we laid the basis of a friendship which has lasted all our lives. This man was Colonel Creswell, who afterwards became the leader of the Labour Party in South Africa.

Another prominent figure of the day with whom the *Echo* brought me in close contact was W. T. Stead. He had already had a remarkable career in championing unpopular causes, and to his surprise had been appointed by Cecil Rhodes one of the trustees under his Will. He had been at one time the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. His most successful journalistic enterprise was his *Review of Reviews*. He now conceived the idea of producing a morning paper under novel conditions. It was to go to press several hours later than the other morning papers, and was to be circulated by special delivery. The *Echo* secured the printing contract, with the result that our offices and our machinery were employed in a double shift, and at first I myself sat up through the night to superintend operations.

The *Daily Paper*, as he called it, did not survive many weeks. Stead's editorial work exhibited his usual brilliance but the special method of distribution encountered many obstacles, and he had not enough capital to stand a prolonged period of losses. His health broke down, and he went abroad, leaving the winding-up of the affairs of the paper to others. When he came back, our bill for the printing still remained unpaid, and I met him several times before a compromise settlement was arrived at. I remember on one occasion when I went to see him at his office off the Strand he told me of a dream he had had in the previous night. He was being kicked to death in the street, he said. When I looked pained, he said he would rather die in some such way than merely succumb to illness. I recalled these words later when I learnt that he had gone down in the *Titanic*. He had last been seen, it was said, handing over his lifebelt to another passenger who was without one.

For some years previously Joseph Edwards, of Glasgow, had been bringing out a year book under the title of *The Labour Annual*. Percy Alden suggested to me that this should be taken over by the *Echo*. To this I agreed, and the 1903 edition, with the new title of *The Reformers' Year Book*, was published by us under the joint editorship of himself and Edwards. After Alden resigned from the *Echo* I continued to edit and publish the book up till 1908. I introduced into it portraits and biographies of all the candidates of the Labour Representation Committee, many of whom secured entry into Parliament in the 1906 election. Another feature to which I gave a great deal of thought was 'Questions of the Day', which appeared in the 1908 edition. In this section I dealt with 'Free Meals for School Children', 'Housing and Town Planning', 'Old Age Pensions', 'Woman Suffrage' and a great many other subjects. Several of the proposals advocated are now the law of the land.

In the spring of 1905 I started to publish a monthly paper entitled



*The Labour Record and Review*, which would chronicle the principal events of the Labour world. I wrote a character sketch in each issue of one of the leading figures in the movement Will Crooks formed the subject of the second number, and Ramsay MacDonald of the third, and I told of the old village schoolmaster who had helped to form his mind Of Keir Hardie I wrote—

“He has been called uncompromising and unpractical, but this is a mistake Compromise in the matter of principle, it is true, he will never allow, but he has shown over and over again that in its legitimate field he recognizes that compromise has an important place What Hardie refuses to do—and thereby shows his practical knowledge of the world—is to declare beforehand his intention of being satisfied with much less than he really wants ”

In later issues I had sketches, among others, of George Lansbury, Philip Snowden, Olive Schreiner and Christabel Pankhurst

My wife and I saw a good deal of Keir Hardie in those days, for he had rooms in a tiny house in an old-world court behind Chancery Lane, and he often dropped in to see us at Clement's Inn Closer acquaintance confirmed the impression I had formed when I met him for the first time at Mansfield House He was, in fact, the exact opposite of the uncouth and unpractical iconoclast, which those whose privileges he threatened painted him He was the most sensitive person I have ever known in my life, and if he was unconventional it was because he had to be, in order to achieve his purpose I remember an occasion when he was being held up to ridicule for some queer utterance He came to lunch with us next day, and told us why he had made it A certain injustice had to be exposed, he had tried several times to get it across to the public in the normal way, but each time he had been blocked If he made a *gaucherie*, he knew that that would be published to discredit him So he had deliberately exposed himself to censure, in order that public wrong might not escape detection

As for the other charge that he was unpractical, it is true that he dreamed dreams of a more just world But a very large number of those dreams have already come true, and if any man is entitled to be accounted the principal architect of the better order it is he He founded the I L P and from it built up the Labour Party and inspired both with his spirit He lived long enough to secure respect for his personality, even from those who continued to oppose his policy; but at the time of which I am writing his worth was only appreciated by a few, and I am happy to have been one of that number I remember that I wrote for him a memorandum on the Budget which he incorporated almost unaltered in an article in the *Financial Review of Reviews* At his invitation I also served on the Metropolitan District Council of the I L P

Keir Hardie also visited us in our house at Holmwood, and brought with him a party of political friends There, too, we used to entertain the members of Emmeline's girls' club, and in it we set aside a large upper room for their special use at week-ends One of our guests was a tiny girl who used to climb up and stand on my head She is now my very efficient secretary Later, in recollection of the generous hospitality of Mrs Brook,

at Broadmoor, we built a special children's cottage a few yards away from our own house. On its south-east wall I erected a mural sundial with a modification of the traditional sundial couplet. This cottage is no longer our property, but the sundial is still on the wall, and anyone going by road from Horsham to London will see it just before commencing to descend the hill at Holmwood.

In the late autumn of 1904 Emmeline decided to pay a visit to Egypt, and her sister and cousin went with her. She planned a voyage up the Nile in a *dahabiyah* and a return to Cairo by a caravan of camels. All the arrangements worked well, and the dragoman, in expression of his respect for her organizing ability, exclaimed "Your husband must have paid a very big price for you." On being told that that was not a British custom he said that then if he were an Englishman he would have many wives! I joined the party shortly before Christmas, and Emmeline had to telegraph to me to Cairo the place they would be in next day. The captain of the boat would only commit himself to the extent that they would reach a certain village 'if Allah wills'. However, when I got out of the train just before dawn the whole party was there on the platform to greet me and conduct me back to the boat.

I shall not attempt to describe the wonders of Luxor or Assuan or even of Sakhara, where relics of two separate periods of pre-Roman Egyptian history are preserved, the interval between the two being greater than that which separates the later one from our own day! Of the caravan journey I will only say that it was a most exhilarating experience to ride, day after day, across the desert on camels, and to pitch our tents at night under the never-failing stars. I understood how it came about that the Egyptians were such accurate astronomers. Our final camping ground was only a short distance from the sphinx, and in the early dawn of the following day we walked there to see it lit up by the sunrise. The Arabs spoke of it as 'he', but I saw it as the sculptor's amazing conception of the eternal feminine.

When we got back to London I had to face the finances of the *Echo*, which were becoming a serious drain on my resources. By various means I had increased its circulation by some 60 per cent. I had taken a branch office in Poland Street, Soho, and installed printing machines there to enable me to reach the West End with the news ahead of our rivals. Mrs Lloyd George had performed the opening ceremony. But circulation of itself does not directly help to make a paper pay. I remember reckoning that if costs were divided into those required for producing a single copy, and those for the paper, printing, and distribution of additional copies, the receipts from sales barely covered the latter. All the overhead charges and editorial expenses had to be borne by the revenue from advertisements. At one period of my control, when the 'tobacco war' was in full blast and rival firms were advertising against one another, we got almost within sight of making ends meet. But with the formation of the Imperial Tobacco Company our advertisement revenue from this source fell off by no less than £3000 a year and we were further away from prosperity than ever. I decided now that I could not any longer face the drain on my resources.

The paper passed accordingly into the hands of the debenture holders, among whom I had not a majority control. There was some proposal to sell the copyright. I should have been prepared to dispose of it to a progressive paper like the *Star*, but not to the Conservative group which alone offered to buy it. After some dissension among my fellow debenture-holders my view prevailed. The paper accordingly simply ceased publication. I felt it would be quite wrong to allow the staff who had worked throughout my control with the zeal and loyalty traditional in newspaper circles to be cast off with nothing but their wages to the date of the closing down. I accordingly paid them myself sums in lieu of notice which would give them a reasonable time to look round for other employment. I also met in full the claims of the unsecured creditors who, in my view had supplied goods to the company on the strength of my family name. I did not, however, consider myself under any personal obligation to my fellow debenture holders, who had invested their money before my time from political or business motives and who must be presumed to have faced the normal risk of so doing.

When all was done I computed my total loss on the venture. I found that by a curious coincidence it was almost exactly equal to the fortune which had been left to me very shortly before by my brother. Newspapers had been his passion, but he had never had the opportunity of indulging it by running a paper of his own. I am certain that I could not have spent his money in a way that would have secured his more hearty approval.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SUFFRAGETTES

South Africa—President Steyn—General Hertzog—The 1906 Election—Woman suffrage—Why it was opposed—Militancy—My initiation—Annie Kenney—The first London imprisonments—The WSPU—Christabel—Arrest of my wife—Ten pounds a day—My wife's release—Militant demonstrations—Bail—Split in the ranks

THE years from the demise of the *Echo* up to the outbreak of the first World War were to be the most dramatic in my life. They were the years of the women's rebellion in which my wife and I were to be called upon to play an active and prominent part. But the opening scenes took place in our absence and it was not till many months afterwards that I knew anything at all about them.

Emmeline and I had taken the opportunity of a break in our active responsibilities to pay a visit to South Africa. It was partly a holiday and partly a political pilgrimage. We visited Bulawayo and the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi; we stayed with Merriman at his Stellenbosch farm and with Olive Schreiner at her little home in Hanover. We saw Chinese labour at work in the gold mines of the Rand and Indian coolies in the sugar plantations of Natal. We went to lunch with ex-President Steyn of the Orange Free State, who told us how returning to his home a broken man after signing the treaty of peace he had been met by his little daughter, a child of six with the words: "So you are the man who has

signed away our country " General Hertzog also recounted to us a personal experience of the war His troops, he said, were in flight He saw only one way to stop the rot Taking out his revolver he threatened to shoot the first man who should cross a certain bridge No one met the challenge, and the retreat was stayed

We hurried back to England for the general election in 1906 I had a vague hope that I might be asked to contest some seat But it did not happen Instead, I went to Denbigh District to speak for Clem Edwards, who had opposed the Boer War Chinese 'slavery' and Free Trade were the main issues of the election and all over the country the Government candidates were defeated Winston Churchill, standing as a Liberal, put Arthur Balfour out in Manchester In my home constituency of Reigate a Liberal was returned for the first time in its history, and Lord Farrer, paying a compliment to a local woman worker, attributed the victory to 'cheap bread and dear Mrs Powell' Thirty of the Labour Representation Committee candidates were elected, they promptly decided to call themselves 'The Labour Party', and chose Keir Hardie as their chairman Nineteen miners were returned as 'Lib Labs' Eighty-four Home Rulers won Irish seats The great Conservative Party was reduced to 158, while the Liberals (including the miners) numbered no fewer than 379, giving them a majority of 88 over all other sections of the House

It was indeed a 'famous victory', and as I read day by day the results as they came in I thought that the millennium was at hand I little anticipated that, before that Parliament came to its close, I should be one of the most determined opponents of the Government Campbell-Bannerman proved himself in many respects a wise and progressive Prime Minister He won the loyalty of many of the Boers by according to them a large measure of self government, and restoring the original title of the 'Orange Free State' Though Winston Churchill said that the word 'slavery' as applied to the Chinese on the Rand was a 'terminological inexactitude', pressure was brought to bear on the mineowners to have them all repatriated Old age pensions were instituted The Taff Vale judgment which had put Trade Union funds in jeopardy was overruled by Act of Parliament When the Czar of Russia dismissed the Duma—an incipient Russian Parliament—C-B' did not hesitate to challenge diplomatic propriety by saying openly in the House of Commons, "The Duma is dead, long live the Duma!"

But there was one section of the community who regarded the Government as reactionary and recalcitrant It was a tiny handful of women who, for some time prior to the general election, had dared to pop up at Liberal meetings and ask what a Liberal Government, if returned to power, proposed to do about giving votes to women Once, they had got into trouble with the police, who alleged that they were guilty of creating a disturbance and of unseemly conduct and their leader, Christabel Pankhurst, had been sent to prison They had neither influence nor money, and they and their agitation appeared to be wholly without significance But Keir Hardie thought otherwise His own experience had taught him not to be contemptuous of small beginnings, his lifelong acquaintance with the members of the Pankhurst family had revealed to him their unique qualities and indomitable spirit, above all, his political

genius approved the audacity of their methods. So he encouraged their militancy and introduced the leaders of the movement to his personal friends—among others to Mrs Cobden Sanderson and to my wife.

The modern generation, when they read about the suffragette campaign of those years, must often be puzzled to understand what all the fuss was about. Why was it that there was such bitter opposition to the enfranchisement of women? Why did the supporters adopt their unconventional and disagreeable methods? Why did Christabel Pankhurst single out the Liberal Government for special attack, seeing that there were more Liberals than Conservatives who advocated the change? I will try briefly to answer these questions before proceeding to tell the story of the campaign and of my part in it.

The principal motive of men's opposition to woman suffrage was undoubtedly fear of the use to which women would put the vote if they got it. Men, it was said, were governed by reason, women by emotion. If once the franchise were thrown open to women, they would speedily obtain a majority control and force an emotional policy on the country to the detriment of the public weal. In particular it was said (though less openly) that on sex matters women were narrower and harder than men, and that if they were given power they would impose impossibly strict standards of morality, and endeavour to enforce them by penalties for non-observance. A further fear was that, if women came to share the political, intellectual, and occupational life of men they would lose their special charm and attraction. A slightly different motive was the innate love of domination. This was sometimes expressed in the blunt rejoinder "Votes for Women, indeed, we shall be asked next to give votes to our horses and dogs."

The full reasons for militancy, if told at length, would occupy several chapters of this book, but the short point can be stated quite simply. An unenfranchised section of a community can exert no direct political pressure. If the Government chooses to refuse its demand for the vote, and if the existing voters acquiesce in this refusal, it can express its determination not to be governed without its consent only by some form of rebellion. Since the middle of the nineteenth century there had been a constitutional agitation to persuade the Government to grant woman suffrage. It had failed. The suffragettes decided therefore that the time had come to confront the Government with acts of defiance.

It was part of the political genius of Christabel Pankhurst that she went over the heads of the private Members of Parliament, and fastened on the Government, which alone possesses the initiative in the British Constitution as it is worked today. She found a Liberal Government particularly easy prey because of its professed principles, enunciated in such slogans as 'No taxation without representation', and 'Government of the people by the people for the people'. By asking the Liberal leaders not for sympathy but for a pledge of action she placed them on the horns of a dilemma. If they gave it, they would have to implement it, if they refused it, they would alienate the large and influential associations of Liberal women whose help was so valuable at election times. They therefore took refuge in silence or ignominious retreat.

For my own part, I had never troubled myself very much about the question of woman suffrage, principally, I think, because I saw no sign

that women themselves were particularly interested in it I knew that my wife called herself a supporter, but as all her passionate political advocacy was devoted to other causes, I concluded that her interest was mainly academic. Like most Englishmen, I am moved much more by concrete grievances than by an assertion of abstract rights, and I failed to see what the average 'sheltered' woman of the middle classes had to complain about, or what particular contribution she had to make to political life. Yet it was principally this class of woman who would get the vote, if the existing law were to be amended as suggested, so as to remove the sex disqualification without making other changes.

On the other hand, I had no masculine prejudice against women taking an active part in the life of the world. On the contrary, I wanted to see them putting their lives to some purpose instead of frittering them away on a silly and useless round of social functions. Any illusions I may have had at one time about the superiority of the male brain had been badly knocked about, first by the successes of women at the University, including that of Miss Philippa Fawcett, who had been placed 'above the senior wrangler', and later by direct contact with my wife, with Olive Schreiner and other women of capacity and vision. It may fairly be said, therefore, that I had a mind open to conviction. But I do not suppose that I should ever have become entangled with the suffragettes if it had not been for my wife.

I remember I was sitting out in the garden of my home in the country on a July morning in 1906, when a telegram came to me from her asking me to come up to London and help to secure defence for some prisoners. I went up at once and joined her in a police court. It was a dingy and dirty place, and, as we waited for the three suffragettes to be brought in, I noticed that the dock was not clean. I stepped forward and rubbed it dry with my pocket handkerchief. I mention this trivial incident because it illustrates the French proverb, '*C'est le premier pas qui coûte*'. Ridiculous as it may seem, this single act, which I performed out of courtesy to my wife's friends, made a greater demand on my courage and resolution than anything I did later in the campaign, not excluding my own prison sentence and forcible feeding. By it I testified that in this matter of the women's revolt I had taken sides with the dock against the bench, and I accepted the full implication of all that that entailed.

The three prisoners presented a sorry spectacle to the casual observer. All were working women and poorly dressed. Apart from her flaming eyes, Annie Kenney looked an ordinary north country mill girl. Mrs Sbarboro was the wife of an Italian workman resident in East London. Mrs Knight was lame and insignificant. Except my wife and myself they had few friends in Court, and they had no assurance that, if they were sent to prison, they would have any sustained backing when they came out. Yet they were standing there undismayed when charged with disorderly conduct. They had been in Cavendish Square trying to see Mr Asquith ringing his doorbell and refusing to go away! Annie Kenney was accused of having had a whip in her hand. She denied it, her sincerity was so obvious to the Court that the policeman withdrew the accusation and said that he might have mistaken a string bag she was carrying for a whip! It was alleged during the proceedings that in Cavendish Square a policeman had said, 'These are the sort of women who want a pint of

gin in the morning " "No, sir," said Mrs Sbarboro solemnly to the magistrate without any intentional humour, 'he did not say that, he said 'These women are the sort who want *half* a pint of gin in the morning' " In the end they were bound over to keep the peace, and, on their refusal as a matter of principle, were sent to prison

These were the first imprisonments in London in the campaign, but there was a considerable story behind them As far back as 1903 Mrs Pankhurst had founded the Women's Social and Political Union in Manchester, a kind of offshoot of the Labour Party But it was not till the autumn of 1905 that Christabel Pankhurst, then a brilliant young law student, had, as I have already mentioned, raised the flag of revolt The facts were that she and Annie Kenney had gone to a meeting to question Sir Edward Grey and had displayed a little home made banner bearing the words 'Votes for Women' He had refused to answer, and they had been ejected, in the street outside Christabel, attempting to address the crowd, had been arrested and charged with disorderly behaviour. A prison sentence followed, and the University authorities warned Christabel against any similar action by her while she was under their jurisdiction So Mrs Pankhurst and Annie came South 'to rouse London', as Annie told my wife when she first met her Mrs Pankhurst staged a little scene in the ladies' gallery of the House of Commons when a woman suffrage Bill was talked out A persistent attempt to interview the Prime Minister at his house was met by arrests, but, later, the women were released, and he consented to receive a deputation representing all sections of women suffragists Replying to their speeches he said that he could not do what they asked, as his Cabinet was divided He advised them to try to convert their opponents It was in pursuance of this advice that they had gone to Mr Asquith's house as his opposition was notorious

From this time onward the suffragettes surged up into my life They invaded my flat, and almost took possession of it and everything in it They engrossed the attention of my wife, who had become their honorary treasurer They brought with them an inexhaustible fund of logic and laughter courage and charm, reason and raillery By their very presence they knocked the bottom out of the silly caricatures of them as lanky, bespectacled, arid women, which appeared in the Press Christabel Pankhurst herself arrived from Manchester freshly crowned with the highest University honours a veritable *Portia* out to plead the cause of her sex She was quite irresistible, and my wife and I placed the spare room in our flat at her disposal Mrs Pankhurst, too, was often our guest Another visitor was Mary Gawthorpe, a roguish little maid who could flatten out an interrupter at one of her meetings, and yet leave him amused though perplexed

All through the summer of 1906 the campaign went on Open air meetings were the order of the day—in London, in Hyde Park and at street corners, in the provinces, in the recognized places for such gatherings Considerable crowds attended, attracted by the publicity given in the Press to the militant methods explanation of which was given on every occasion In general the audiences, though they kept an open mind on the main issue, gave the women a fair hearing and were intrigued by the verve and wit of the speakers An exception was the meeting at Boggart Hole Clough in Manchester, at which I was present in person Stimulated

by a few rowdy youths a regular stampede occurred, and some of the women were hunted through the park and ran imminent risk of being trampled to death. I felt intense indignation, and registered a vow to stand by the movement till victory was won.

Nevertheless, I did not at first deem it my business to take any active part in the struggle. The day had gone by when 'ladies' expected 'gentlemen' to be kind enough to tell them how to get the vote. This was a campaign organized by women and executed by women who were out to show the stuff they were made of. Christabel and her mother were masters of political strategy. My wife was a genius at attracting financial support. The rank and file made excellent speakers, hecklers and workers. There was no lack of initiative, drive, courage and enthusiasm. But I began to be aware that something was missing. There was a danger that by the very exuberance of its growth the movement would outrun its own co-ordination. There was a need for what is today called 'planning' on the business side.

The first step was to take an office. Most conveniently the lower floors in Clement's Inn had recently been vacated by the Land Registry Office, and two rooms, the first of many the Union was subsequently to occupy, were immediately available. They were opened as London Headquarters in September 1906. Incidentally, I was not sorry to recover undisputed possession of my own flat, which was just above! At my suggestion Miss Kerr, a friend of E. V. Lucas, consented to give up her own secretarial business and run the office. Her amusing experiences with some of the voluntary workers I will tell later. Mrs. Sbarboro, now released from prison, was given the job of looking after it on the domestic side. Her mother-wit was an unfailing source of entertainment. She always referred to her husband as 'my old kill-joy'. Once someone gave her a copy of *No. 5 John St.*, by Richard Whiteing. She brought it back next day saying—"I don't want to read about the people I have been meeting all my life, I have gone back to my Plato."

That autumn saw, too, the beginning of the Monday afternoon 'At Homes', which went on continuously year in and year out during the militant campaign. They were intended principally for women, but men were not excluded. Strategy was explained, militant demonstrations were announced, a collection was taken and members were enrolled. I generally came and sold literature—books, pamphlets and, later, the *Votes for Women* newspaper. Among other books, I arranged with Putnam's for a whole edition of *Women and Economics*, by Charlotte Perkins Stetson, and it was all sold out. When the attendance grew too big to be accommodated in the office in Clement's Inn the venue was changed to the Portman Rooms in Baker Street, and later to the Queen's Hall. Overseas visitors came in large numbers. There was a constant attendance of Indians, and American women 'doing' London considered their visit incomplete if they had not been present at at least one of these gatherings.

At the end of October 1906 events occurred which brought me into far closer association with the movement. My wife was arrested. She had gone, with other members of the Women's Social and Political Union, to the House of Commons on the day that Parliament opened, and in accordance with a preconcerted plan she had jumped up on to one of the



seats in the Central Lobby and started to address the M P s and others who were present. Pulled down and bundled out into the street, along with a number of other women who had made a similar protest, she had tried to re-enter the House and had been taken into custody. I knew nothing of her intentions beforehand, and I only learnt the story after she had been released on bail and ordered to appear at Rochester Row Police Court next morning. It was a great shock to me, for things which happen to other people assume an entirely different aspect when they come right home to one's own family circle.

I went with her to the Court next morning, and she surrendered to her bail, together with nine other women, including Mrs Cobden Sanderson, daughter of Richard Cobden and wife of the veteran colleague of William Morris. The police evidence was naturally confined to the element of public disorder, and the magistrate cut short Mrs Cobden Sanderson's attempt at a political defence. My wife did not try to speak. In the end he bound them all over to enter into their own recognizances to keep the peace for six months. Thus they unanimously refused to do. In default, they were committed to prison for two months in the Second Division. They were accordingly packed off to Holloway in Black Maria.

I determined at once that during my wife's absence her side of the work should not suffer. I agreed to look after the finances, and at a public meeting that very afternoon I made an appeal for funds. By way of setting the ball rolling I promised to contribute £10 for every day of her imprisonment. I intended it as a public gesture, but it was as a jest that the story went all round the world. In one of the South African papers there was even a long leading article all devoted to my promise! Later, I was able thoroughly to enjoy the joke myself, but at the moment I was too much engrossed with other matters to care whether I had become famous, notorious or merely ridiculous. Of course the money and the publicity were equally 'jam' to the W S P U.

My wife's action had other repercussions of a personal kind. English people are wont in ordinary circumstances to set barriers around their emotional life, in order to fence it off from the criticism of their fellows. But there are times when these barriers are broken down, and I found that this was happening now. Mr Cobden Sanderson came and literally fell on my neck. My wife's relatives opened out their hearts to me, and revealed themselves in a way they had never done before. Such moods pass, but they leave permanent consequences behind. They give profundity to friendship, and they provide a stimulus for action. In the days that immediately followed I saw much of Emmeline's father, who was with me in all that I had to do with regard to her. Her sisters and her brother-in-law pulled their weight on the political side.

A day or two later I got permission to pay a visit to my wife in Holloway Gaol, a grim fortress where rules and regulations were still enforced belonging to a bygone age. To my infinite distress I found that she was heading straight for a nervous breakdown. It was imperative that she should be got out of prison without delay, and that could only be done if she now gave the undertaking which she had originally refused when it was demanded by the magistrate. I realized to the full the humiliation that this involved. It was indeed a case of 'new waves breaking in ere

we are righted from the old' \* But there was no alternative I told Mrs Pankhurst She made at first some scornful remark about the attitude of husbands But I said to her "Do not make it harder for me than it must be," and she became sympathetic and helpful I took Henry Pethick with me to the Home Office We were allowed a further visit to Holloway and the release was arranged A day or two later I travelled with Emmeline to Italy, and leaving her with friends returned myself to London to carry on her work So ended the story of my wife's first imprisonment, the failure of which was to be so brilliantly redeemed by her in later years, when she had won a victory over herself by conquering fear

In the months that followed I reorganized the accounting side of the funds, and I separated off the sales of literature into a trading department under the title of the Woman's Press (This was in fact a misnomer, as we never did any printing ourselves) I secured Mrs Beatrice Sanders, wife of Alderman Sanders, afterwards a Labour M P, to act as financial secretary to keep the books, and Mrs Alice Knight, a shopkeeper, to take charge of the Woman's Press Some 50 branches of the W S P U founded by the organizers had to be co-ordinated financially with headquarters In these and other ways I contrived that the machinery of the Union should keep pace with the amazingly rapid growth of the movement in funds and activities My wife, on her return from Italy to take up what might be called the civil side of the agitation, from which she was not of course in any way precluded by the undertaking she had given, thoroughly approved of all that I had done

I was soon to be found an additional and unique job With the opening of 1907, women concentrated on securing the passage of a Suffrage Bill during the Parliamentary session of that year The constitutional section organized a meeting in the old Exeter Hall in the Strand, to be reached by procession from Hyde Park The weather was bad but the women ploughed bravely forward on their 'mud march' Arrived at the hall, they were astonished to hear Israel Zangwill, the novelist, defending the militants Two other distinguished writers, Elizabeth Robins and Evelyn Sharp, had already expressed similar views and Mrs Fawcett herself, the leader of the older suffragists was generous enough to acknowledge that though her own methods would be constitutional, militancy had revived the issue

The W S P U had been active in seeking a Government promise, but it reserved its main fire for the anticipated refusal From all over the country women had come up to London prepared to face the triple ordeal of buffeting in the street, arrest and imprisonment The King's Speech was delivered on February 12 It contained no reference to Votes for Women Next day at the Caxton Hall a 'Women's Parliament' assembled and passed a resolution of protest, and decided that it should be taken forthwith to the House of Commons The deputation was met by a large body of police and turned back with some violence Fifty four women, including Mrs Despard and Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst, and two men were arrested and taken to Cannon Row Police Station There a difficulty arose Unless they were to be detained all night they had to

\* From the *Medea of Euripides*, translated by Gilbert Murray

be let out on bail, and some person of known standing had to be found, in addition to themselves, to go bail for them and undertake that they would present themselves at the police court next day. By common consent I was sent for and after considerable delay the process of making out the charges was complete, and I was free to bail them all out.

The following morning I came to the Court and was allowed to go in with them into the room where they awaited their turn. I told them how police court proceedings were conducted and advised them as to their defence. Afterwards, when sentence had been passed, I was permitted to see them before they went away, and I had to jot down all sorts of messages to be given to friends, and other things that had to be done during their imprisonment. Closely similar procedure was followed a few weeks later when a Private Member's Bill to give votes to women, introduced by Mr. W. H. Dickinson, was talked out in the House of Commons on March 9. Another Caxton Hall meeting sent another deputation to Parliament, and this time 72 were arrested. My services were again requisitioned to bail them out and to advise them next day on the conduct of their case.

During the whole period of my connection with the W S P U I bailed out most of the Suffragettes who were arrested in London, amounting to nearly a thousand in all, and it is worth putting on record that not one of them ever attempted to escheat her bail. It used to be rather a tedious business waiting several hours in the police station, but it was often relieved by sallies of humour between the women and their captors, for in general, once the arrest had been effected, there was no animosity between them. The police were glad to be through with their unpleasant duty. Many of the women, to my surprise at the time, were singularly debonair and gay. I realized afterwards that having cast aside tradition and convention and having dared to take action they had broken down life-long inhibitions and already achieved a freedom that they had never before known.

The Press devoted a great deal of space to accounts of the militant activities, and while it trounced the suffragettes, using all sorts of abusive epithets to describe them and warning them that they were 'putting back the hands of the clock', it began in fact to deal seriously with the main issue in a way that it had not done for many years. In particular, the morning *Standard* devoted one whole column every day to its discussion. On certain days this column was placed at the disposal of the constitutional section, on other days it was open to the militants, and finally the anti-suffragists, among whom Mr. Humphry Ward figured prominently, were given an innings. It was part of our claim that women's economic position would be improved when they got the vote. The anti-suffragists countered this by the statement that wages were not governed by politics but by the law of supply and demand. I remember that I wrote an article pointing out that both the supply of and the demand for women's labour were likely to be affected by political considerations. To this there was no rejoinder, and history has amply justified my assertion. Among other things all sorts of better paid posts then closed to women have been opened up to them as a direct result of their enfranchisement.

As the year wore on and increasing numbers of women became members of the W S P U, certain divergences of opinion began to mani-

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE TRIUMVIRATE

*Votes for Women* newspaper—A hectic week—Albert Hall meetings—Demonstration in Hyde Park—The Pankhursts in gaol—My wife in command—My only brief—Growth of the W S P U—My wife's second imprisonment—The militant campaign—The hunger strike—Winston Churchill as Home Secretary—The Men's Political Union—By-elections—A suffragette fair—Spirit of the militants.

FOLLOWING immediately on the events described at the end of the last chapter, I founded the newspaper *Votes for Women*. It commenced as a threepenny monthly with a cover on which was a cartoon of a woman brooding over the House of Commons. After six months I brought it out weekly at 1d, and it grew rapidly in size, circulation and advertisement revenue. Women wearing special sashes sold it at meetings and at street corners all over Britain. Supporters of the movement made a practice of doing all their shopping with firms who advertised in its columns.

My wife and I were joint editors. She signed her contributions to its columns, while I wrote the unsigned notes of the week and some of the leading articles. Christabel generally had a political point she specially wished to drive home, while Sylvia wrote a history of the suffrage movement. But the special feature of the paper, unusual for a weekly journal, was its 'hot' news of what had just happened, was happening, or was planned to happen in the immediate future. This naturally enhanced its interest for members of the Union and for the general public, but it meant extra hard work to get the paper to press. Thus after a raid on Parliament, with its sequel of police court proceedings, whole pages of copy had to be written up and despatched in haste to the printer so that that very night they might be on the rotary machine for the issue next day. I made a point of seeing the paper to press myself, so that, from April 1908 to my imprisonment in 1912, it was only on the rarest occasions that I could absent myself from the office for more than two or three days at a time.

The expansion of the movement was particularly rapid during the winter of 1907-8. Additional organizers were being constantly appointed to carry on the propaganda in every part of the country. Subscriptions to the funds were coming in in increasing volume. A three-days 'Women's Parliament' was to meet in February at the Caxton Hall, and arrests were anticipated. The Union was holding its first Albert Hall meeting in March, and 7000 tickets for it had to be sold. Preparations had also to be made for the monster demonstration in Hyde Park in June.

It so happened that at this time of special pressure Mrs. Sanders, the financial secretary, met with a street accident which incapacitated her for some weeks. Her assistant had given notice a few days before that she was leaving for another job. I took over the book-keeping myself and found to my dismay that it was considerably in arrears. While I was struggling with it, someone came in to tell me that Mrs. Knight, the efficient secretary of the Woman's Press had got pleurisy. Sorry as I was for her personally, I laughed outright at the news. There seemed

nothing else to do Mrs Knight, if she reads these lines, will understand and forgive me

We got it all straightened out somehow, but when it was at its worst, Mrs Pankhurst and some 60 other women were arrested I bailed them out in the evening, and after rising at six next day, and putting in three hours' work in the office, I rushed off to the police court to give general advice and assistance There I met an indignant husband of one of the prisoners who asked me why I had not acted on a letter he had posted to me the night before I told him I had not yet had time to read my morning's post "Most unbusinesslike," was his infuriated comment. After that, I doubled the office staff and impressed on them all that they must never get into arrears again If they reported that they were becoming overworked I would always appoint additional help They took me at my word and during the next four years a further threefold increase took place

Our first Albert Hall meeting in March 1908 was a huge success Mrs Pankhurst, freshly released from prison, received a great ovation when she took the chair My wife—"the most persuasive beggar in London" as she was sometimes called—secured a total collection in promises and cash of no less than £7000 Christabel made a great political speech But the internal organization of the meeting left room for a good deal of improvement Scores of women had been simultaneously charged with stewarding, taking the collection selling the literature and disposing of tickets for future meetings and each had to take her individual instructions from the organizer-in chief, Mrs Drummond In so vast a place as the Albert Hall this had involved considerable delay and some confusion So after the meeting was over we worked out a plan for future occasions, dividing up the helpers according to the functions to be performed, subdividing them for the different parts of the Hall, and appointing intermediate officers between Mrs Drummond and the rank and file It all worked splendidly when the time came

In succeeding years we used to meet in the Albert Hall in March, May and October. On these occasions all parts of the Hall were packed, and once we had to have an overflow in the Kensington Town Hall Until the historic meeting of October 1912, when she appeared alone, Mrs Pankhurst always had with her her daughter Christabel and my wife and one or two other speakers There were no microphones in those days, and from the top gallery the figures on the platform looked incredibly small and far away, yet, by speaking slowly and refraining from turning to the right or the left, they made themselves clearly heard Mingling with the crowd coming out it was interesting to realize that each of the leaders had her own particular attraction and following But by common consent the most exciting part of the meeting was the collection My wife had been busy preparing for it weeks in advance, writing endless personal letters to secure promises of money As these amounts were read out one by one the enthusiasm of the audience grew, and streams of promise-cards rolled up to the platform and were announced They were then handed over to the auditor of the Union, Mr A G Sayers, and to our financial staff to be counted. A great scoring-board chronicled the growing figures Finally the collection was taken and the complete amount was announced at the end of the meeting

I have already made reference to the monster demonstration in Hyde

Park in June 1908 It was organized in response to the challenge by hostile politicians to show public support comparable to that accorded to other extensions of the franchise in times past So the plans were ambitiously laid to surpass all of them by a wide margin. There were no less than twenty platforms with four women speakers on each. In the centre of the site, the roof of a furniture van served as a 'conning-tower' from which to direct the proceedings Bugles sounded for speaking to begin, and again for the resolution to be put at the end, simultaneously from all platforms But the special feature of the demonstration was that instead of a single procession, from the Embankment or some other central starting-point, there were seven separate processions from different parts of London all converging on the park These processions were in turn led not merely by residents in the neighbourhood of the particular line of route, but by people from all over the country who had been brought by some 30 special trains to the various London termini

It was great fun organizing the demonstration and advertising it For weeks previously enormous posters appeared on the hoardings with life-size portraits of the twenty women chairmen For the day itself nothing was left to chance Each of the processions was divided into sections and for each section there was a group captain to see that the form-up and marching order were correct, and a banner captain to see that the banners were all being carried Over these were a group marshal, a banner marshal and a chief marshal for each procession, and in charge of them all was 'General' Drummond, whose title was first given her on this occasion There were station stewards and park stewards, and there were chief stewards whose sole business it was to see that their subordinates carried out their duties correctly I left plenty of time, an hour for the form-up, half an hour for every mile of the route, and an hour for the tail of the procession to reach its platform inside the park

The police fully entered into the spirit of the demonstration Realizing, as much as we did, the enormous numbers likely to be involved, they recognized the danger of any untoward incident, and co-operated with us in every way to avert it Once when the park authorities were proving difficult about the removal of certain railings, which I feared might be a death trap, Mrs Drummond went to the head of the police to get his help, and every railing marked on a plan which I had given her to show him was taken up before the day The police rode at the head of the processions, and led them in at the various gates of the park, their simultaneous arrival at the site was an unfeigned satisfaction to those of us who awaited them from the 'conning-tower'

It was admitted on all sides that the numbers who came to the park that day were greater than had ever been gathered together before on any one spot in the whole history of the world *The Times* correspondent referring to them used these words 'Like the distances and numbers of the stars, the facts were beyond the threshold of perception' Whole streets came out to watch, and carried away by the general enthusiasm, went without their Sunday dinner and marched with the women Hung up on one of the walls of my office are two photographs. One of these is that of the crowd round the platform at which my wife was chairman, the other round that of Christabel Each alone would be counted a magnificent audience for any ordinary demonstration.

After this overwhelming evidence of public support it was hoped that Mr. Asquith, who had now become Prime Minister, would withdraw his opposition. But, like Pharaoh of old, he hardened his heart and would not let the women have their enfranchisement. Christabel, who never let the grass grow under her feet where militancy was concerned, immediately on receipt of his refusal organized another 'raid' by women on Parliament. Plans were openly laid, and the public was invited to assemble outside the House of Commons, to show their support for the women. The actual deputation, led by Mrs. Pankhurst and my wife, whose period for being bound over had now expired, was suffered to go to the House and return, but later 27 women were arrested. Of these, two, entirely on their own initiative, went to Downing Street and threw stones which broke the windows of the Prime Minister's house. All were sent to prison.

Throughout the whole summer the agitation went on. At many by-elections an active anti-Government policy, which I shall describe more fully later, was put into effect. There were also the usual protests at meetings and other propaganda. But one demonstration in London was almost in the nature of a picnic. The proprietors of the Earl's Court Exhibition made a business arrangement with us to hold a gala day there at the end of July. So our members turned up in the purple, white and green of the W S P U, and large numbers of the public came to see them, and to listen to the speeches which were delivered from several platforms in the evening. As a result many new members enrolled, and there was a useful addition to the funds.

With October came the reassembly of Parliament and another raid on it by the women, announced in a handbill calling on the people of London 'to help the women to rush the House of Commons'. This bill made history, because Mrs. Pankhurst, Christabel and General' Drummond were arrested for publishing it. The sensation of the trial was the brilliant examination by Christabel of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Herbert Gladstone, whom she had subpoenaed to attend as witnesses, owing to the fact that they had been present in Parliament Square on the night during the demonstration. But this did not affect the final result. All the three women were sent to prison and with them went about 24 others who had taken their part on the night in question. My wife alone of the leaders, was left to conduct the agitation, with such help as I could give her, for the rest of that year.

I was at first a little anxious as to whether she would stand the strain. But she rose triumphantly to the occasion. She had already exhibited her remarkable power of impressing her personality on an audience. The night the Pankhursts had been arrested she was billed to take the chair at a meeting of women. When she arrived on the scene, she found that a number of medical students had broken into the hall and occupied all the seats with a view to preventing the meeting from taking place. My wife calmly mounted the platform and after giving them a short address on human liberty called on them, as men, not to stand in the way of women securing their emancipation. Pointing to a student at the end of the front row, she asked him to get up and go out. He did so! The others followed, the women came in, and the meeting went forward as arranged!

Shortly before these events in London, Mr. Asquith and Mr. Herbert

Gladstone had held a political meeting in the Coliseum in Leeds. Suffragettes, led by one of the W S P U organizers, Mrs Baines, had staged a demonstration in the street outside. She was arrested and charged with illegal assembly and riot. This meant a trial before a judge and jury for the first time in the course of our campaign. Christabel begged me therefore to defend Mrs Baines and if possible to secure the attendance of the two Cabinet Ministers as witnesses. Until then I had never practised as a barrister, but I promised to do what I could. Proceeding to Leeds, I saw the local solicitor instructing me, who pointed out that the Coliseum had glass doors at the street end, and that, if there had been a riot in the street outside, persons seated on the platform (at the other end) could not fail to be aware of it. He therefore suggested to me that subpoenas could legitimately be served on Mr Asquith and Mr Gladstone, and I accordingly arranged that this should be done.

Mr Asquith, however, obtained a *rule nisi* in the High Court to set the subpoenas aside, on the ground that they were frivolous, and I was summoned back to London to plead that they should stand. Both the Attorney-General and the Solicitor General appeared against me. I argued that there was no precedent for setting aside a subpoena in criminal proceedings, and that I ought not to be called upon to 'show cause' for not doing so, as this would be to compel me to disclose my defence in advance of the trial of my client. The judges overruled this preliminary objection, and I proceeded to justify the subpoenas on the ground referred to in the previous paragraph, and supported my case by an affidavit from a man who had himself sat on the platform. Though there had been no evidence rebutting my affidavit, they said they did not believe it. Mr Justice Bigham, in announcing the decision, said that it was not due to the exalted position of the Ministers, Mr Justice Walton concurring said that other people who did not want to appear as witnesses must not think they could get similar relief! The *Daily Telegraph* reported my speech verbatim and cut down that of the Attorney-General to a short paragraph!

In consequence of this decision the actual trial at Leeds lost its dramatic interest. But Mrs Baines won the sympathy of those present in the Court by her quiet dignity and when, after a verdict of guilty by the jury, the judge ordered her to be bound over and she refused and was sent to prison, admiration of her courage was freely expressed. Some attempt was made to disbar me for my conduct over the subpoenas, but *nothing came of it*.

When the Pankhursts and Mrs Drummond were released at the end of the year they were given a tremendous welcome, which took the form of a public breakfast attended by 500 persons. They then learnt of the enormous progress that the movement had recently made. The publicity given in the press to the trial had been turned to good account in many ways. Membership subscriptions and literature sales had mounted. Also the man, as well as the woman in the street had begun to discuss not merely the unusual methods of the suffragettes but the stupidity of the Liberal Government in resisting their demand. Nevertheless the King's Speech in February 1909 made no reference to the subject of votes for women, and another raid was planned.

This time my wife decided to face arrest and imprisonment herself.



With her to Parliament Square went a band of some 28 women, including a new recruit, Lady Constance Lytton, whose family was connected with most of the leading politicians of the day. After some buffeting in the Square all the women were arrested. At the police court next day my wife got two months in default of finding sureties to keep the peace. The others got one month. To my infinite relief, she served her sentence with great serenity, and on her release was able to make a powerful speech at the welcome breakfast given in her honour at the Wharnccliffe Rooms. Six hundred people were present, and the gift to her of a motor car with a W S P U monogram on the door was announced. Meanwhile, I had been made Joint Treasurer of the Union, and thus for the first time occupied an official place in the organization.

Sylvia Pankhurst, in her book *The Suffragette Movement*, and my wife, in her book *My Part in a Changing World*, have told the story of the years that followed in some detail. I do not propose to repeat what they have written. But I will describe in broad outline the main activities of the agitation and their development during the succeeding years. I will explain, too, the part that I played in them, and how it led up to the conspiracy trial and my imprisonment in 1912.

First and foremost were the 'raids' on Parliament, to several of which I have made reference already. They took place every few months in order to protest against repeated refusals by the Government to enfranchise women. Our main plans were published in advance because wide public support was required. I was never myself an eye witness of any of these raids, having to remain at the office waiting on the telephone. But the women used to tell me that the crowds were almost universally friendly and that the police, with certain exceptions, did their duty without undue violence. Nevertheless it was the minutes before arrest that made the greatest demand on the physical courage of the suffragettes. They were borne forwards and backwards, often pummelled and kicked, and sometimes flung on the ground. As a result, several women received permanent injuries, and at least one died from the effects of her treatment.

The window breaking campaign, which was a feature of the later raids, arose as a spontaneous outburst of women who were not prepared to be knocked about prior to arrest. It was a short and simple act of defiance which resulted immediately in being marched off to the police-station. It had the further advantage that in general it was punished directly by fine or imprisonment instead of by binding over with the alternative of a long sentence (technically given for contempt of Court). At first Christabel frowned on these more violent methods, but later they were recognized and planned. I even remember going with her one dark evening to a country lane and selecting a bag of suitable missiles!

I used to have a busy time at the police court on the days following a raid. The police collected together in a big room all the suffragettes whom I had bailed out overnight, and I gave them an address on how the proceedings were likely to be conducted. Then I answered individual questions and finally received all sorts of messages for relatives. After that I went into the court itself and listened to the cases of the ordinary

prisoners which preceded those of the suffragettes. I cannot say I was favourably impressed. No doubt the magistrates had every wish to be fair. No doubt most of the prisoners were guilty and as anxious as everyone else to get the matter settled expeditiously. But the exceptional case arose from time to time, and then the rapidity of the proceedings and the assumption that the police were probably right told heavily against the prisoner if undefended by counsel. I remember in particular one woman who, by sheer inadvertence, was never informed when it was her right to speak, and who was sentenced and hurried off to the cells calling out between her sobs, "But I have never had a chance to state my case!"

When it came to the suffragettes, the magistrates had a very difficult task because they were confronted with something they did not understand. If they had done so, it might not have made any difference to the sentences, but at least they would have omitted the little homilies which fell on such very deaf ears. As it was, the proceedings were something of a farce. Most of the suffragettes did not trouble to dispute the police evidence even when it was inaccurate. But I shall never forget the violent reaction of one little lady to a remark by the constable who had arrested her. "At this point," he testified, "the prisoner waved her arms about, and turning to the crowd said to them, 'Come on, boys!'" "I never said that," she exclaimed. "I should never have *dreamed* of addressing the crowd as *boys*." Her indignation could not be appeased. She had been prepared to be buffeted in Parliament Square, to be taken into custody, to be brought before a magistrate, to serve a sentence in prison, but to be told in public that she had called out, "Come on, boys," to the crowd was an unforgettable insult. A year later, when I met her, it was still rankling.

The suffragettes pried into many dark places in the prisons throughout the country, and when they came out they told the public all about them. "I had an insect," said one woman, referring to the condition of her cell. "I called him 'Asquith'." Others had more serious criticisms. Under this exposure some general reforms took place, and the suffragettes in particular got better treatment, but they were not accorded the status of political prisoners. Miss Wallace Dunlop was the first to rebel against this refusal by the adoption of the hunger strike. She was alternately cajoled and threatened, but she remained firm and was ultimately released long before her sentence was due to expire. Many prisoners thereafter followed her example, but no pressure to do so was exerted on them by headquarters. They generally secured early release, but in one case that I remember, a woman went without food for an incredible number of days, before the fact was discovered and she was set at liberty.

After a time the Government gave instructions that the prisoners on hunger-strike should be fed by force, a procedure which I will describe later on as it was applied to myself. This roused passionate opposition from our members and a considerable protest from the general public, but the Government persisted, and won a case which had been taken to the Courts to test its legality. Lady Constance Lytton hunger struck in prison but was released at once on doctor's orders. She therefore disguised herself as Jane Warton, a working woman, and got arrested again. This time she was forcibly fed with considerable violence. After she had described the divergence between her experiences on the two occasions,

intrepidity They were almost invariably ejected with great violence, and suffered acutely, at the time and afterwards, from the effects Naturally the organizers of the meetings adopted all sorts of means to prevent this nuisance They issued tickets to 'safe people', but even then 'the voice' would often be heard emanating from some unexpected place, maybe from the roof, from under the platform, or from the organ loft Sometimes the suffragettes intercepted the Minister on his entrance or his exit "By God, they've got him!" ejaculated a colonel once who, as host, had driven his distinguished guest to the hall by by-ways, only to encounter the suffragettes at the end of the journey

It is only fitting that I should pay a tribute here to a courageous band of men supporters, who took it on themselves to go to meetings to stand by the women, and to question Ministers themselves when women failed to gain admission They were organized by my friend Victor Duval in the 'Men's Political Union' This self-imposed task often subjected them to personal violence and sometimes to imprisonment, but they persevered with it unflinchingly The M P U membership included many men distinguished in literature and the arts Prominent among these was Henry Nevinston, whose friendship I highly prized

Unlike the militant methods which I have just been describing, the special by election policy of the W S P U involved neither disorder nor illegality Nevertheless it constituted a new departure in political strategy which at first startled and confused many of our friends The older suffrage societies, if they took any part at all in election contests, contented themselves with approaching the local candidates, and giving their support to that one who answered their questions most favourably Christabel considered this as sham fighting and a proved failure\* It was the Government alone, she pointed out, with whom the decision rested, so long as its veto held, no amount of 'favourableness' on the part of private Members would be of any avail Therefore, at elections, the forces of the Union and the columns of *Votes for Women* were deployed in a campaign, not in support of any one of the candidates, but in opposition to the Government nominee, whatever his individual views might be

Of course, when the man to be attacked was himself an opponent it was easy, but when he proclaimed himself a supporter, and still more when other suffrage societies put in an appearance to back him up, the policy required considerable explanation Nevertheless, I am as convinced today as I was then that Christabel was right I am equally satisfied that it appreciably affected the voting, and sometimes was the determining factor in the result It was not only that the women speakers won many direct supporters by their combination of logic, wit, and charm, they also punctured badly the case the Government were then making against the House of Lords, based on its unrepresentative character This fact was frequently acknowledged at the time by the Press, and I remember in my own neighbourhood an elderly farmer specially asking me to procure for him twelve large favours of our Union, for himself and his friends to wear on election day

Running parallel with all these activities the W S P U carried on an

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\* In several successive Parliaments there had been in all parties a number of supporters of women's enfranchisement. But they had tacitly acquiesced in the question being shelved.

enormous educational campaign. In addition to the three meetings a year in the Albert Hall and our regular Monday afternoon At Homes in the Queen's Hall and Thursday evening meetings in the Portman Rooms, all the largest halls in the country were taken from time to time for our principal speakers, and some 200 lesser meetings per week were addressed by our organizers and the rank and file. Every year our London processions grew in numbers and in brilliant pageantry. On the last occasion that I remember, in 1911, when all the other suffrage societies joined forces with us, the form up five abreast occupied the whole length of the Embankment from Westminster to Blackfriars and the procession took three hours to pass a given point, so that its tail did not reach the Albert Hall until after the meeting had already been concluded.

By way of light diversion the Union took the Princes Skating Rink in Knightsbridge, and organized there a fortnight's fair. Sylvia Pankhurst exhibited her artistic genius by making for it a special stencilled frieze which ran all round the building, and was greatly admired. Harry Lauder, a loyal supporter of the suffragettes, came and patronized the hat stall. The Actresses' Franchise League co-operated with us, and together with their male *confrères* did a number of 'shows' for the aid of the funds. Of course all the leaders were present in person, and I remember two girls asking me if I would introduce them to Mrs. Pankhurst. When I did so they rather shamefacedly preferred her an odd request. "Would you very much mind," they said, 'if we might look at your feet?' "My feet!" said Mrs. Pankhurst, slightly raising her long skirt so that they could see them. "There," said one girl to the other, "our shop-mates were all wrong when they said the suffragettes had large feet. Hers are unusually small!"

In the early days of the organization a great deal of the clerical work was done by devoted voluntary workers. In one or two instances the pathetic inexperience of the sheltered woman betrayed itself. One of them was given a directory and asked to address envelopes to all the women in a certain street. Looking through them afterwards Miss Kerr, the manager of the general office, discovered that a 'Mrs. Vacant' appeared to occupy a considerable number of the houses! One subscriber, sending a postal order, ruled two neat little lines and put a tiny 'and Co', not on the order, but on the outside of the envelope. The honorary secretary, Mrs. Mabel Tuke, had a flair for making contacts both by interview and correspondence, which she generally penned with her own hand, but once an uncompleted circular was sent out over her signature and drew the following response:

"Dear,

"I address you as I was addressed. Seeing that I am a single man living in one room, the hospitality you request for your lady delegate might not be acceptable if provided! But I am a friend of your cause and enclose 5s. for you to obtain it elsewhere."

Later, more political duties were found for the voluntary workers, and the clerical work was performed by a paid staff who came to number nearly sixty persons, some of whom took over most responsible tasks. I remember, for instance, that an elaborate Hyde Park demonstration

was organized almost unaided by three girls who had only a year before been a typist, a cashier in a shop, and a junior secretary respectively. Headquarters office expanded till it occupied thirty seven rooms in Clement's Inn. *Votes for Women* attained a circulation of nearly 50,000 copies, while the *Woman's Press* moved out to a shop at the top of Charing Cross Road where the clock was installed whose hour numbers originally spelt out its title and which still can be seen there with different lettering.

It is perhaps not surprising that the direction of this campaign in its totality occupied nearly all the waking hours of Christabel, my wife, and myself. I never left the office for a short walk without on my return being pounced on simultaneously by three or four people, each insistent on having some knotty point resolved. Emmeline and Christabel had the greatest difficulty in finding time to prepare their speeches or write their articles for the paper. We never had any formal committee meeting, but generally I had to make an appointment even with my own wife if I wished to discuss anything of moment with her, and it was only at the week end in my country house that the three of us had enough leisure to thrash out together any complicated problem.

But of course it was the splendid women who constituted the organizers and the rank and file of the movement on whom the brunt of the daily battle fell. They included among them many of the foremost women of the day—artists, musicians, doctors, authors, actresses, and women of high social standing. They faced physical injury and imprisonment and, in addition, a social ostracism of which the leaders, surrounded as we were by a circle of admiring supporters, were almost unconscious. Ungrudgingly they put aside all considerations of self to further the common endeavour, and in so doing they achieved as a society a degree of concentration which I have never seen equalled in any movement in my lifetime.

I doubt whether future generations, who may read in cold print the story of the suffragettes, will ever fully comprehend the measure of enthusiasm which the campaign engendered. Still less, I fancy, will they understand the exuberant gaiety which permeated all ranks, in spite of the serious nature of the issue and of the sacrifices which individuals had to make for its realization. One explanation is that it was in very truth a case of 'youth knocking at the door', which was not belied by the presence of a few grey haired veterans who belonged to the ranks of the eternally young. Like Wagner's hero Siegfried, the suffragette had still the song of the bird ringing in her ears when she went forth to slay her dragon.

The other explanation is more subtle. The phrase 'Government rests on the consent of the governed' is usually interpreted to convey the idea that a State ought to be run on democratic lines. But it has in fact a much wider significance. Whenever within a community any section withholds its consent from the basis of the existing constitution, it thereby forms an *enclave*, throughout which the writ of the Government does not run. To Christabel and her followers the suffragette, by her act of militant defiance, had placed herself in rebellion against existing authority. For her the 'subjection of women' about which John Stuart Mill wrote had ceased to exist. In spirit she was already free.

## CHAPTER IX

## PRISON

Periods of truce—Renewal of militancy—My arrest for conspiracy—Evelyn Sharp—A night at Bow Street—Police court proceedings—On remand—Uncle Edwin—Frayed nerves—A visit to Christabel in Paris—Trial at the Old Bailey—Tim Healy—My address to the jury—Verdict—A friendly rider—Sentence—Wormwood Scrubs—Brixton—Life in prison—Political status—Hunger strike—Forcible feeding—Release

THERE were two periods of truce during the militant campaign. The first was in 1910 and lasted for nine months. It arose out of an attempt by Lord Lytton, Mr. Brailsford, and other Liberals to frame a measure more acceptable to their Party than the one clause Bill demanded by all suffragists, which would have given women the franchise 'on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men'. The new measure was known as the 'Conciliation Bill', and in order not to queer the pitch for its discussion the WSPU agreed temporarily to lay aside militant action. Mr. Asquith provided two days in July for the second reading, which was carried by 299 votes to 189, but he refused time for further stages, and militancy was resumed.

In 1911 the Conciliation Bill was reintroduced with slight modifications. It passed its second reading on May 5 by 255 votes to 88. Mr. Lloyd George then stated on behalf of the Government, that, though they were not prepared to find further time for it in 1911, they would provide a whole week in 1912 with satisfactory closure facilities. The WSPU viewed this deferred promise with considerable misgiving, but when Mr. Asquith wrote to Lord Lytton saying that it would be kept 'in the spirit as well as in the letter' Christabel rather reluctantly consented to a second period of truce, during which even the anti-Government by election policy was suspended.

On November 7, however, Mr. Asquith announced that in 1912 he would himself introduce a Manhood Suffrage Bill. This Bill, he said, would not include women, but an amendment could be moved to bring them in. He added that it would be left to a free vote of the House, and that as the Cabinet was itself divided on the question the constitutional practice of joint Cabinet responsibility would be waived. This announcement came as a great shock to those who had trusted to the good faith of the Prime Minister, for it clearly put the Conciliation Bill completely out of the picture, and thereby broke the spirit of the promise made earlier in the year. It is true that Mr. Asquith proposed a substitute procedure. But the WSPU recognized at once (correctly, as the sequel was to show) that this further promise was quite worthless. Indignation was general among women, and many new recruits joined the militant section.

In order to allay this disquiet, Mr. Asquith, for the first time, consented to receive on November 17 a deputation from the WSPU in conjunction with other suffrage societies. Christabel and my wife represented the Union and put our case, but they secured no material advance from him or from Mr. Lloyd George, who was also present.

Accordingly, they announced the end of the truce, and on the following Tuesday my wife led another protest demonstration to the House of Commons, when she and 219 other women and three men were arrested and sent to prison. My wife's sentence was one month without the option of a fine, but owing to an irregularity in her trial a writ of *a certiorari* was applied for and a *rule nisi* was granted and she was released on bail\*.

The following spring still larger and more violent demonstrations took place. On March 1 Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Tuke, the honorary secretary of the Union, deliberately broke Government windows in Downing Street. Three days later, some 260 other women broke, with hammers, plate-glass windows in many of the principal thoroughfares of London. This was the first time that private property had been deliberately attacked, and a new note of hostility against the militants was sounded in the Press and elsewhere. Emboldened by this attitude, the Government decided to deliver a blow at the very centre of the militant agitation, which they hoped would smash it once and for all and bring to an end, at the same time, their own embarrassment over the suffrage question.

On the night of March 4 I had organized bailing arrangements for the contingents of women brought in to the various police stations, adjacent to the scenes of their operations. Next morning I had attended at one of the police courts, and after that I had to write up the whole story for the columns of *Votes for Women*. I was still engaged on this task late in the evening in my office in Clement's Inn, when there was an unexpected knock at the door. A police superintendent entered, and told me that he had a warrant for my arrest. I was to be charged with conspiracy. Christabel and my wife were also to be arrested. Mrs Pankhurst and Mrs Tuke, already in custody, made up the number of our co-conspirators. He took me upstairs to my flat, where we found my wife but not Christabel who had for several months past ceased to reside there.

Some such frontal attack on our organization had long been anticipated by us. We had foreseen that it would give our agitation a new significance. In place of the pretence that it was all a matter of petty disorder, to be decided in the police courts, there would be the recognition that it was a political rebellion, the larger issues of which could not be excluded from the hearing of the case. In our view, the gain to the movement from this new orientation was likely far to exceed any loss sustained by the temporary removal of the leaders.

Personally, I had often wondered whether the Government, if they took action of this kind, would include me within the net, and if so whether there were any steps I ought to take in advance to ensure the continuous running of my side of the work. As to the business control of the organization, I felt pretty confident that it could get on very well without me—at any rate for a time. I was less happy about the editorship of *Votes for Women*, which I realized required technical experience

\* This had rather a curious sequel. The case finally went against her but in spite of this there appeared to the Crown solicitor no means of sending her back to prison and at liberty she would therefore have remained but for the fact that she had by that time been arrested again on a new charge.

in addition to political judgment. The one person who I knew possessed all the qualifications was Evelyn Sharp, the novelist. I had debated in my own mind whether I should approach her and put the hypothetical position before her. I had decided not to do so, preferring to wait till the event, when I felt sure that she would be unable to refuse. But I had not foreseen that the police would come for me late at night, on the day before the paper went to press, and that I might have no means of communicating with her. While I was considering what to do about it there was another knock at the door and in walked Evelyn Sharp! She had come by chance to discuss an entirely different matter. The police allowed us a few words together, and the question of the paper was speedily settled.

Her visit had another, even more important, result. On leaving Clement's Inn she went straight to Christabel's flat to give her the news. Without a moment's delay, Christabel got up and went out. After taking refuge with a friend that night she left next day for France, where she was to remain, except for one memorable occasion, till the outbreak of war in 1914. It has always been a puzzle to me why the police did not have Evelyn Sharp followed. I can only suppose that they felt so sure that Christabel was in Clement's Inn that they thought it unnecessary. In consequence of this mistake, Christabel was left free to direct the affairs of the Union at a very critical time, and one of the main objects of the Government in initiating the conspiracy trial was defeated.

Emmeline and I were taken to the police station which adjoins the Court in Bow Street. I knew it well, for it was there that most of the suffragettes had surrendered to their bail prior to their appearance in court. Police stations, for the most part, have no proper accommodation for the detention of prisoners during the night, and Bow Street was no exception to this rule. This ought surely to be remedied if persons are in fact to be detained there. Even a malefactor is entitled to a place where he can lay his head with some chance of sleep, and an unconvicted prisoner, who has to face his accusers in court next day, ought not to be expected to sit up all night. However, so far as we were concerned, everything was made easy. News of our arrest had quickly spread, and a friendly M.P. arranged with a hotel to supply not only food but even beds and bedding, and the police did everything in their power to make us comfortable.

But I was too excited to get much sleep. A stream of mixed emotions flooded my brain. Predominant was the sense of exultation in the adventure on which I had been summoned to embark. Not once, but many times I had taken farewell of my wife and friends when they had set out on a similar journey. Now this experience was to come to me. I was to be no longer shut off in General Headquarters, but right up in the front line, sharing its dangers and excitements with the rank and file of my women comrades. There was a fascination, a kind of fearful joy, in facing the unknown and in surrendering to others the ordering of my ways. Some future generation, born and bred in security and living out its life in unchallenged freedom, may not find it easy to appreciate my frame of mind. But this present generation, whose sons and daughters are going out, in the cause of human liberty, to meet perils and hardships



incomparably greater than mine, and glorying in them, will have no such difficulty.

The hearings in the police court lasted three weeks. My bankers, my printers, my landlord and others with whom I had had dealings told the magistrates what sort of life I had lived. Their evidence was supplemented by a selection of letters and papers, taken from our flat and offices by the police. There seemed scarcely anything relevant or irrelevant that I had done or said or written in the last few years that was not brought out. It was a veritable day of judgment. But for all its solemnity the lighter side kept constantly coming in. Someone had written to us suggesting that we should adopt a cipher giving each of the Cabinet Ministers an amusing pseudonym. This little jest was treated in all seriousness by the prosecuting attorney. But he certainly surpassed himself when, referring to the suffragettes generally, he said to the magistrate "But for the prisoners in the dock, *these* women *might* have led *comparatively* respectable lives." I had every desire to conform to the decorum of the Court, but when I thought of all the women in our movement—women of character and dignity, women of title and social standing, of the little lady who would not have *dreamed* of saying "Come on, BOYS", to the crowd—I was convulsed with uncontrollable laughter.

So long as the police court proceedings lasted, the magistrate refused to grant us bail and sent us to prison 'on remand'. I went to Brixton and Emmeline to Holloway. On the days when our case was heard at Bow Street we were taken to and fro by the police in cabs, and greeted each other at the police station. In Brixton I lived the life of the ordinary 'remand' prisoners who wore their own clothes, exercised together could buy their own food from outside and receive daily letters and visitors, but were otherwise subject to the same prison discipline as were those who were serving a sentence. I have never ceased to regard this practice as a quite unjustifiable anomaly but up to now it has defied the march of progress, the only improvement being that it is today impressed on all magistrates that it should only be in exceptional cases that reasonable bail should be refused.

One of my visitors at Brixton was my Uncle Edwin. I had met him from time to time over business matters, but otherwise he had kept away from me ever since our meeting in the days of the Boer War, which I have described in an earlier chapter. Now that it seemed to him that I was in trouble, and in a sense even in disgrace, he could stay away no longer. Though entirely disapproving of my views, he did not utter one word of criticism. On the contrary he assured me that he had complete faith in my sincerity, and that he had written to the Governor of the prison a letter embodying that idea. He even went so far as to confide to me his view that in promoting militancy I was providentially inspired, for he was convinced that it would prevent the enactment of woman suffrage, a proposal to which he was irrevocably opposed! After that, until the day of his death, two years later, I was in constant touch with this lovable old man.

At the end of March the police-court proceedings came to an end. We had, of course, reserved our defence. Mrs Pankhurst, my wife and I were committed for trial, while Mrs Tuke, who, as the magistrate rightly surmised, had played only a passive rôle in the organization of militancy,

was discharged. Bail was now granted to us and we were free to use as we pleased the intervening weeks before the case came on at the Old Bailey. I decided to spend the Easter holiday with relations in the West of England and later to go across to Paris in order to see Christabel who, unknown to the police, had taken up her residence there.

On the journey to the west an incident occurred which I feel ought not to pass unrecorded. The train was terribly full, and my wife and I had taken first class tickets. There seemed to be only one carriage with room to spare, but an occupant of it stood in the doorway deliberately barring entrance. He had probably made up his mind that we were third class passengers. Greatly incensed and determined to get in, I put up my arm to push him aside, and my hand slipped up to his throat. Fortunately my wife intervened, and a passing guard procured us entry to the carriage, but when I cooled down I realized how nearly I had embroiled myself in a scene which might have had specially unpleasant consequences, as I was out on bail on my own recognizances. The fact was, of course, that I was overwrought, and that three weeks in prison, where all initiative is suppressed, had done their deadly work in unfitting me for the active intercourse and responsibilities of ordinary daily life in the outside world.

As to my later project, I was not quite sure that the police would approve of my leaving the country while still on bail, and I was anxious not to put them on the track of Christabel's whereabouts. So, instead of starting from London and taking the short Channel crossing to France, I decided to drive to Newhaven and go from there by the night boat to Dieppe. I also put on unusual clothing, in case descriptions of my appearance had been sent to the coast police. I was rather embarrassed, therefore, when Eva Moore, the famous actress, who was an ardent and devoted suffragette, came across to my table in the restaurant and addressing me by name gave me a friendly welcome. But no ill consequence followed and I spent a few pleasant days in Paris and discussed plans of all sorts with Christabel. Shortly after that she announced publicly where she was living. No open application was made by the British Government for her extradition. Whether they made a secret enquiry, and were told that it would not be granted, I do not know.

Meanwhile, we made all preparation for our defence. We realized the importance of having an experienced counsel in Court on our behalf, and were fortunate in securing the services of Tim Healy, who was not only an eminent lawyer, but also an active Irish politician who had himself seen the inside of a prison, and was later to be the first Governor-General of the Irish Free State (now Eire). This meant that one of us had to forgo the right to cross examine witnesses and address the jury. Emmeline agreed that he should represent her, thus leaving Mrs. Pankhurst and me free to conduct our own defence. The prosecution was entrusted to Sir Rufus Isaacs, so that for the second time in my Court experience I was pitted against the Attorney General of the day.

The trial began on Thursday, May 15, before Lord Coleridge and a jury, and continued from day to day. The Court was crowded out with suffragettes and other visitors, and the newspapers gave nearly verbatim reports in their columns. Each night we were released on bail without formality, and at the week end Emmeline and I went down to our country

house at Holmwood The season was exceptionally early, and I remember noticing that the wild rose, my favourite flower, was already beginning to bloom in the hedgerows I wondered when I should see it again

The evidence for the prosecution followed, of course, the lines that had been laid down at the preliminary hearing at the police court, except that the irrelevant matter, to which I had there taken exception in vain, was now either omitted or ruled out by the judge on our application In the nature of things, we could not offer rebutting evidence against facts which were many of them chronicled, quite openly, in the columns of *Votes for Women* What we tried to do was to bring home to judge and jury and to the wider public outside the Court the political nature of the case We claimed, in a word, that the disorder complained of was the inevitable consequence of the refusal of the Government to deal justly with women, and of its incitement of them to violence by constantly reminding them of the things which men had done when they were agitating for the franchise

From the outset I regarded it as hopeless to expect the jury to return a verdict of 'not guilty', and I concentrated upon trying to induce them to add a political rider They started by being decidedly unsympathetic They declined my offer to supply them with bound volumes of *Votes for Women*, which would have enabled them to follow the case more readily, and generally they appeared, as I watched their faces, to be uninterested, and probably annoyed that they had been chosen to give up so much of their personal time to this long case But as the trial proceeded, the human drama gripped them, and by the time it came to the closing speeches they did not allow a word of what was said to escape them

In my speech, I explained to them that I was not only myself a lawyer, but instinctively a law abiding person to whom disorder was repellent I told them some of the incidents in my own life, and in those of the two women who were with me in the dock I gave them a short account of the history of the W S P U and of how the Government had refused to respond to argument or reason, and had thereby compelled women to adopt militant methods—the only weapon a voteless section possessed I quoted some of the taunts and gibes which had been flung at women by leading Ministers of the Government, and asked them to consider whether these were not the real incitements to violence I pointed out that being a man, I had not thought it my business to do acts of militancy myself or to incite women to violence, but when women rebelled against the Government's refusal to give them justice I had decided to stand by them In so doing I believed that I was not only furthering the cause of human liberty but also helping to prevent the disaster of a sex war I concluded with an extract from a speech of the great Gladstone—'If no considerations in a political crisis had been addressed to the people of this country except to remember to hate violence and love order and exercise patience the liberties of this country would never have been obtained'

I had hoped to be allowed to call some evidence to testify to the enormous political and educational activities of the Union, and a number of distinguished men and women including Lord Rhondda, Sir John Rolleston, M P, and Sir Edward Busk were in attendance to give it but the judge ruled that such testimony was irrelevant to the issues of the case

So, after moving speeches for the defence had been delivered by Mrs Pankhurst and by Tim Healy on behalf of my wife, the Attorney-General again addressed the Court and the judge summed up. The jury were away so long that the Attorney-General began to fear for his verdict, but no such doubt passed through my mind. The cause of the delay was apparent when the jury returned and the foreman read out their verdict. They found all three of us guilty but added these words to the judge: "We unanimously desire to express the hope that taking into consideration the undoubtedly pure motives that underlie the agitation that has led to this trouble you will be pleased to exercise clemency and leniency in dealing with the case"—surely the nicest rider that a jury ever attached to an adverse verdict.

My wife was now free to break her imposed silence and address the judge before he pronounced sentence. In a little gem of a speech she urged him to recognize our inalienable right to political status, and asked him to consider what would be the feelings of men, if the position of the sexes were reversed and they were brought up in a Court composed entirely of women with a woman judge. He listened attentively, and then passed sentence upon us all of nine months in the second division, and further ordered us to pay the costs of the prosecution. People from all parts of the Court crowded round us to shake hands and bid us goodbye. Then the warders took us below preparatory to dispatching us to our respective prisons. A few weeks later the judge's two daughters, who I think had attended all the sittings of the Court, sent in their names as members of the WSPU!

Emmeline and Mrs Pankhurst were taken once more to Holloway, and I was sent to Wormwood Scrubs. Before being separated we had agreed as to our behaviour in prison. We were, of course, entitled at once to the benefit of Mr Churchill's new rules about prisoners 'not guilty of moral turpitude'. This 'one-and-a-half class', as we had christened it, would enable us to wear our own clothes, have our own food, and receive more frequent visits and letters than ordinary second class prisoners. But we did not propose to be satisfied with anything short of full first division treatment, because this alone would establish our political status. We decided, however, to await the result of outside agitation before adopting the hunger-strike as a protest against the refusal to give it to us.

When therefore I arrived at the prison and was told to take off my clothes and put on prison dress, I declined to do so. It was the first time in my life I had flatly refused to obey authority, backed by overwhelming force, and I wondered what would happen next. I found to my surprise that authority, in the person of the warder, was equally embarrassed with myself. He contented himself with locking me in a cell and telling me to await further orders. After an hour or so, the Governor came and said to me that I could wear my own clothes that night, and that he would tell me his decision next day. I was taken to a cell with a plank bed on which I spent the night.

Next morning the Governor came in 'all toggled up' and told me that he was going to the Home Office to ascertain how I was to be treated. Meanwhile I was given bread and a tin of mixed vegetables in a kind of soup. I had every intention of swallowing this food, but it was so highly seasoned with onions and other things which I detest that my throat

refused to carry out my orders to do so I was then taken to the exercise yard and told to walk round by myself The place was very large and the main body of prisoners in prison dress was quite a long way off Some of them were engaged in building a wall

Presently I saw a man coming towards me in ordinary dress He was presumably a visiting magistrate Surveying me through his lorgnettes, he asked me my name and the sentence I was serving, and I duly replied He then turned on me and said "You are a jolly lucky fellow, if I had had to sentence you I should have given you two years" This was, of course, a most improper thing for him to say, but I had not the smallest inclination to argue with him, so I merely slightly bowed my head to imply respectfully that, in such a place and at such a time, I would not question his view This seemed to infuriate him "And as to the women you are associated with," he said, "I don't know from where you have got them all together" I bowed once more He returned to the attack again and again, and so far lost his self control that the warder standing behind him was convulsed with laughter This was the only time that anyone insulted me in prison, and I am still at a loss to understand why a visiting magistrate, if indeed it was one, should have so demeaned himself

Later in the day the Governor returned and told me the treatment I was to have, which I recognized at once as that of the one and a half class He said that as there were no facilities for it at Wormwood Scrubs I was to be sent to Brixton next day In the meantime, he would have me put in hospital So that night I slept in a sort of small dormitory and was given different food

I never expected to enjoy a journey in a four wheeled cab as much as I enjoyed the drive across London next day It took an immense time, because neither the warder nor the driver nor the horse had the smallest inclination to hurry As for myself, the whole time was taken up in reading my post, which would not normally have been given to me until the expiry of my sentence It included, in addition to all sorts of letters, the newspaper accounts of the last day of our trial, the leading articles upon the case, and some criticisms of the sentence I had only just finished the last of these cuttings when we were driven through the familiar gates of Brixton gaol

Arrived at the reception centre, I said, choosing my words very carefully, that I did not *propose* to give up my watch, ring or pen This brought the Governor on to the scene He read over the rules to me once more and added, "So you see if you do not obey the regulations you will forfeit your privileges" I looked him straight between the eyes and said "I think you know that what I do, I do purely as a matter of principle" "Yes, I know that," he said, in an entirely altered tone, which he always used thereafter in speaking to me. I realized then how impossible it is for anyone, favoured by fortune as I had been all my life, to experience in full the humiliation which comes to the poor and downtrodden when placed in externally identical conditions

Nevertheless, the essential fact in the life of a prisoner is that he takes on a subhuman status At best he is something less than a man, at worst he is an ill treated animal In spirit he may rise above this derogation from his humanity just as a sick man may retain his equipoise in spite of his infirmity, but on the plane of material action he is subject to

it. When the warder flings open the cell door and says, "Number fourteen, stand up and walk in front of me down the corridor," the prisoner must either obey or rebel, and even if he rebels and thereby asserts his independence, authority will lock him inside his cage, and prevent him from exercising any further a man's freedom of action.

This may be to a large extent inherent and inescapable, but it is aggravated by the archaic character of prison conditions. The buildings themselves and the sum total of the rules and regulations are a remnant of a bygone age when modern psychology was unknown. During my incarceration I was pre-eminently conscious of the futility and silliness of it all. What could be sillier, for instance, than to imagine that a prisoner's anti-social proclivities would be eradicated by shutting him up in his cell for some twenty hours out of every twenty-four, and leaving him, without instruction or guidance, to brood over his grievances against society?

There was also something to me essentially childish about it, for the child is also regarded by many people as subhuman. When I was set to walk round the exercise yard with other prisoners it brought back to me memories of my first 'prep' school, and when I was taken to the bath, and the warder turned on the water and tested it before telling me to get in, I seemed to be back in the nursery. I almost expected him to start washing me!

Perhaps the climax of absurdity was reached when I wanted to cut my finger-nails, and had to set going a long process, which in fact took a week, by putting in an application to see the doctor and get permission from him to have a pair of nail scissors. I gathered that the reason for all this was that I might perhaps use the scissors in an attempt to commit suicide, but all this time I had a huge pair of tailor's scissors in my cell which had been given me for the purpose of making mail bag tabs.

I write, of course, of prison as I experienced it 30 years ago, and I am aware that since then there have been many changes and improvements, and that there would have been far more if war had not intervened to block the passage into law of the Prison Reform Bill of 1939. Nevertheless I do not think it will be disputed that prison conditions remain decades behind what a scientific penology would suggest, and that they are likely to continue lagging behind so long as a reactionary section of public opinion, blind to its own interests, prefers vengeance to reclamation and pins its faith to the efficacy of deterrence.

Of course I myself was in a somewhat unique position which often produced ironical situations. Whenever there was a visiting preacher in the chapel he was brought by the prison chaplain to my cell to be introduced to me, and he generally expressed his pleasure at meeting me and at the fact that I should be in his audience. Once an official of the prison astonished me by saying that he hoped when I was released I would use my influence to get him a better job!

I did not make any direct use of the library, but it must be a boon to prisoners able to occupy themselves with reading. The books I read were sent in to me from outside, but they had to be added to the library when I had finished with them. They were chosen by a little friend of mine, now Mrs Wilfrid Walter, who, though not much of a reader herself, went to great trouble to consult my other friends as to what they thought I should like. I never read a better selection of travel, biography,

science and history than she procured for me. I was also favoured by having the ministrations of a Unitarian chaplain, Mr Fred Hankinson, who afterwards became a close personal friend. His visits were always welcome, if for no other reason than for the fact that he was allowed to bring me news of my wife whom he visited in Holloway.

Owing to the monotony and limitation of prison life, small things make a great impression—sunshine on the wall, the song and flight of birds, a passing remark of an officer. Visits are almost too great an excitement, and when the visitor is gone there is a tendency to worry over what was said or left unsaid. I got pleasure out of a minute sundial I made on my window-sill with a splinter of wood and some sticky remains from my breakfast. I was also glad that the Governor set me to mow the lawns of the prison, it used up some of my spare energy. Some exercise I also managed to take even within the narrow confines of my cell, and in order to enumerate the number of times I performed a given motion I invented a means of counting up to 99 on the fingers and thumbs of my two hands.

Meanwhile, outside the prison an agitation was going forward to induce the Government to accord us political treatment. Petitions were signed in this country by leading men and women, including one specially on my behalf by graduates of Cambridge Oxford and London. Two international memorials were widely signed, and finally it came out in Parliament that some of the jury, who had found us guilty but had added a rider in our favour, had written a letter to the Home Secretary about it. The Government bowed to this widely expressed opinion, and we were transferred to the first division.

The effect of this was to give us greatly increased facilities for writing and reading and keeping in touch with the outside world. Moreover, I learnt that as a first-class prisoner I had a right to ask from a visiting magistrate a further enlargement of privileges. I forget precisely what it was I wanted, but I remember that after some discussion practically all that I had requested was granted by the magistrate. Then, the official part of the interview being over, he said, to my surprise, "And last night I was dining with your uncle."

I should have been content now to serve out the remainder of my sentence without further change. But it was not to be. I received word that the transference to first division had not been extended to the other suffragette prisoners and that they had therefore adopted the hunger-strike in protest. Quite clearly, my wife and Mrs Pankhurst could not as leaders accept political treatment for themselves and allow their followers to fight without them for a similar privilege. Quite clearly, also, I could not dissociate myself in Brixton from their sympathetic strike, whatever they might say about it in Holloway.

Accordingly, I too adopted the hunger strike. The first day I was all hot and bothered about it and got a headache and slept badly. The second day I took myself in hand and found out that what usually passes for hunger is better described as the 'food habit', and that if not appeased it soon passes away. I slept well that night. The third day the authorities discovered what I was doing and carried me away to hospital and told me that they were going to feed me by force.

The head doctor, a most sensitive man, was visibly distressed by what

he had to do. It certainly was an unpleasant and painful process and a sufficient number of warders had to be called in to prevent my moving while a rubber tube was pushed up my nostril and down into my throat and liquid was poured through it into my stomach. Twice a day thereafter one of the doctors fed me in this way. I was not allowed to leave my cell in the hospital and for the most part I had to stay in bed. There was nothing to do but to read and the days were very long and went very slowly. On one occasion the doctor came in and said to me "It is my business as prison doctor to keep you in good health. Worry is bad for health, and I expect you are worried about your wife. I regard it as my duty to tell you that she has been released from Holloway." I smiled my thanks.

A few days later he gave me to understand that he had made a report about me to the Home Office and that something might come of it. He himself would have to be away from the prison next day until evening, but others would look after me if anything happened. Was he really telling me that I was going to be released? I hardly dared to hope it. Naturally I woke very early next morning and started to read my book to steady my thoughts. It was about Mary Queen of Scots and Darnley and Rizzio. The doctor looked in before he left, took my temperature, felt my pulse and made me say 'ninety nine'. Every hour or so of the morning the big key turned in the lock and someone came in, but it was not to tell me of my release but to sit me up in bed and make me say 'ninety-nine', which I began to think was a kind of medical abracadabra. After each visit I tried to concentrate on the life of Mary of Scotland. In the afternoon two fresh doctors arrived and told me they had come from the Home Office. They asked me a number of questions and I went through the usual ritual and they departed. Still no word. I began to fear the worst.

At last as evening was coming on the prison doctor came in and gave me the good news. He said he had waited to tell me until he had made all arrangements. My wife's doctor sister was coming to fetch me in a car. Now that I was to be released I would no doubt be willing to take food in the ordinary way. The warder would pack up my belongings and help me to dress. It all took place according to plan. But as I walked from my cell to the car I found first the Governor, with whom I shook hands, and then a great number of the warders who had lined up to see me off. It may have been imagination, but it seemed to me that I heard a cheer.

Through the prison gates we passed, and I was once more in the outside world—and free. It was a lovely June evening. As I drove up the long hill from Dorking to Holmwood I saw the last of the wild roses on the roadside still in bloom.



## CHAPTER X

## WOMEN WIN THE VOTE

Divided counsels—The leaders separate—Estimate of the Pankhursts—The Cat and Mouse Act—The Mascot sold up—Bankruptcy—Manhood Suffrage Bill—Asquith's dilemma—The Speaker's Conference—Women's victory—Ten years later—Results of women's enfranchisement

AFTER our release from prison and the hunger-strike, Emmeline and I rested for a short time at our country house and then set out to spend a fortnight with a Swiss friend who had a chalet at Braunwald in Canton Glarus. We broke the journey in Boulogne to have a talk with Mrs Pankhurst and Christabel, who came from Paris to join us. We walked together up from the town on to the cliffs that lie between it and Vimeux, and resting there we discussed the future.

The talk developed unfortunately, for we found that during our separation we had been thinking along different lines. I had always had a very high opinion of Christabel's political genius. She had had in my view an almost uncanny instinct for diagnosing public opinion and for choosing a line of action that would make the greatest appeal to it. But I did not feel the same about her present attitude. It seemed to me that her impressions, obtained for the most part second hand, did not fully accord with the facts, and that the policy, based on them, that she proposed to adopt would not therefore have the reactions she anticipated. I had always been in the habit of telling Christabel what I thought even when I differed from her, and I did not hesitate to do so now.

Broadly, the difference between us was this. I took the view that the window-smashing raid had aroused a new popular opposition, because it was for the first time an attack on private property, and that therefore before it was repeated, still more before graver acts of violence were committed, there was need for a sustained educational campaign to make the public understand the reasons for such extreme courses. I took it for granted that she herself would return to London and resume her leadership of the campaign. This would place the Government in the awkward predicament of having to choose between repeating the conspiracy trial in her case, or of declining the challenge to do so. Whichever course they adopted would enhance her position and that of the W S P U.

Christabel took the view that such popular opposition as there might be was not essentially different from that which had over and over again manifested itself when other new forms of militancy had been inaugurated, and that the right method of overcoming it was to repeat and intensify the attack in the early autumn. The suffragette motto that 'deeds speak louder than words' would thus be once more exemplified. She considered that, just because her policy was a revolutionary one, it was necessary that she herself should remain outside the reach of the Government, so that whatever happened she might be in a position to continue to direct it.

Our discussion became somewhat heated, and attracted the attention of Mrs Pankhurst and Emmeline, who were seated a few paces away. They came and joined us and expressed their views. Mrs. Pankhurst,

was complete and irrevocable. There was, further, no appeal against our exclusion from the WSPU. Mrs Pankhurst was the acknowledged autocrat of the Union. We had ourselves supported her in acquiring this position several years previously; we could not dispute it now. It was, of course, open to us to drag the issue into public controversy. But that could achieve no useful purpose, while it would give the enemies of the movement occasion to blaspheme. We refused to pull down, in this way, stone by stone, the edifice which we had with such care and at such cost assisted to build up.

The last scene of this drama, like the first, was enacted in Boulogne. There, in a little hotel facing the quay, the four of us drew up the terms of our separation. The newspaper *Votes for Women* reverted to my wife and myself. The whole of the rest of the organization, including the Woman's Press, remained under the control of the Pankhursts. There was some discussion about the forthcoming Albert Hall meeting which was to have been the welcome to the three prisoners of the conspiracy trial. Mrs Pankhurst invited us to be there without her, but Emmeline wisely declined. We concluded by drawing up a joint statement for publication recording our divergent views on policy and embodying these terms. It duly appeared on October 17, the day on which Mrs Pankhurst faced the *Albert Hall meeting alone*.

Thus ended our personal association with two of the most remarkable people I have ever known. In some ways they were widely different. Christabel, with her girlish figure, her penetrating brain, her inexorable logic, and her power of acute political analysis, appealed particularly to the young of both sexes. Mrs Pankhurst, with her warm Marx blood, her rich experience of life, and her moving voice, whose modulations she knew so well how to control, touched the hearts and won the sympathies of those who would have been unaffected by a merely rational approach. The outstanding characteristic which they shared with one another, and with Sylvia, the younger daughter, was their absolute refusal to be deflected by criticism or appeal one hair's breadth from the course which they had determined to pursue. To that extent they were insensitive to ordinary human considerations. Many men and women who have made history have been cast in a similar mould. They seem to be used by destiny for some purpose whether of beneficent constructive reform or of blind destructive retribution. They cannot be judged by ordinary standards of conduct, and those who run up against them must not complain of the treatment they receive.

The immediate effect on the Union of the Pankhursts' decision was to drive it largely underground. Courageous women were stimulated to acts of increasing daring and danger, and under the Cat and Mouse Act spent alternating periods in prison and on the sick list. Mrs Pankhurst shared to the full in these exploits and perils. Houses were blown up or burnt down, a church was gutted, the contents of pillar boxes were destroyed. The extent to which all this advanced the cause of woman suffrage is not very easy to decide. Undoubtedly, by creating a state of public disorder, it exemplified the saying that 'society rests on consent', and made the man in the street ask why the Government failed to do

tised and an auctioneer appeared on the scene. Our friends came in large numbers to buy up and give back to us the things. An old grandfather clock which my brother-in law had given us as a wedding present was bought in by him and re given to us in this way. It still stands in the hall of our present home. The auctioneer himself caught the spirit of the day, and returned to us with a letter of appreciation an article which he had purchased as a present for his wife.

But the proceeds of the sale did not nearly reach the required amount, and the Government then threatened me with bankruptcy proceedings if I did not produce the balance of the money. After some hesitation I decided to continue my protest, and to face the unpleasant and inconvenient consequences. For several weeks I had to put up with the loss of all direct control of my own affairs and incidentally to forfeit membership of my club. The Government then simply took what was required from my estate.

About the same time the firms whose windows had been broken brought a combined action to recover all the damages from us. Emmeline and I decided to contest it. The trial took place in the Law Courts before Mr. Justice Darling and a jury, and we conducted our defence in person. The case for the plaintiffs was that we were responsible, because the women who had broken the windows had been incited to do so by us. Our case was that it was Members of the Government who were primarily guilty of incitement. Emmeline referred in particular to the words of Mr. Hobhouse, a Member of the Cabinet, who had explicitly reminded women that men, when they were demanding the franchise, had shown their determination by riots and by burning down Nottingham Castle.

Mr. Justice Darling, in summing up, said that her speech was one of the most eloquent\* he had ever heard in that Court and that it was not unnatural she should have used such an argument. But, even if Mr. Hobhouse and Mr. Lloyd George were guilty of incitement, that did not exonerate the defendants in the case before him from responsibility. The jury, after retiring for close on an hour, returned a verdict for the plaintiffs, and judgment was entered accordingly. The sum, about £5,000 in all, was taken from my estate. As I had no other creditors my bankruptcy was then annulled. But the committee of my club did not see fit to restore my membership.

Meanwhile in Parliament the Government were floundering badly over the suffrage question. It will be remembered that, when they had announced their intention of introducing in 1913 a Bill to give the vote to all adult men, they had specifically promised that it would be open to an amendment to include women, and that facilities would be given for this to be freely voted upon and, if carried, embodied in the Bill. We of the WSPU had at the time denounced this promise as illusory. But even we were not prepared for the striking way in which our prophecy was to be fulfilled. The Bill was duly introduced and the requisite amendments handed in. The opinion of the Speaker was then solicited as to their effect. He ruled that their inclusion would so radically extend

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\* The speech evidently made a considerable impression on him, for more than ten years later, when I had occasion to write to him on an entirely different matter, he commenced his reply by reminding me of what I had said and confirming from further experience his view of her speech.

the scope of the original measure as to create substantially a new Bill, which could not then be proceeded with!

There was no reason to suppose that this fiasco had been foreseen by the Government and was a piece of deliberate bad faith. But the bungling had come about through their dishonest attempt to dodge the issue. It was playing with a serious question to pretend that a big constitutional change could be effected by means of a side amendment to a Bill designed for an entirely different purpose. So far, nearly everyone was now agreed. But what was to be done next? Mr. Asquith was himself perplexed and was given much divergent advice. Some said that he ought to resign. Others said that he and his Government ought now to swallow their opposition to woman suffrage, and carry through themselves a measure to enact it. Others suggested that he should reverse his original procedure, and introduce a comprehensive franchise Bill and leave the M.P.s free to cut women out of it if they were so minded. He rejected all these proposals and contented himself with withdrawing the Manhood Suffrage Bill. To women he merely said that they could try their hands with another Conciliation Bill; but this advice was summarily and derisively rejected.

Another year went by. The revolutionary campaign was intensified and the chasm between the militants and a Government which refused to do justice to women deepened. Several new suffrage societies came into being and tried to bridge it, but in vain. My wife, taking part in a protest, was arrested and was subjected to her seventh (very short) imprisonment. Meanwhile in Ireland the Government's Home Rule policy was opposed by open rebellion on the part of an Ulster contingent who were allowed to arm themselves without interference or prosecution. We were not slow to point out the striking contrast between the Government's handling of the two agitations. When the summer of 1914 arrived without any change in the political outlook it seemed certain to everyone that the Parliament elected in the autumn of 1910 would run its course and that women would not be voters at the following General Election. But we were all reckoning without that catastrophic event which, during the next four years and after, was to change the face of European civilization.

*Votes for Women* did not pursue an identical course. The paper continued to advocate the enlargement of women's sphere and found plenty to occupy its columns in the growing activities and needs of women without ever abandoning its claim for enfranchisement.

The war, as it proceeded, brought other internal changes. Mr Asquith ceased to be Prime Minister and a Coalition was formed with Mr Lloyd George at its head and Mr Bonar Law in close association with him. A party truce was declared, and the register of electors was not kept up to date. Curiously enough, it was this last seemingly unimportant fact which was in the end the proximate cause of women's enfranchisement. For as time went on the register became so stale that it was plain that the next general election, whenever it came, could not be fought on it. A Bill to recreate the registration machinery had therefore to be put through Parliament, and everyone recognized that franchise reforms must accompany it. Redistribution of seats, abolition or limitation of plural voting, and an extension of the male electorate had to be dealt with.

But what of women? Could they be left any longer outside? People had not forgotten how the great pre war suffrage agitation had compelled Mr Asquith to drop his *Manhood Suffrage Bill*. Since then women, in spite of early Government discouragement, had exhibited high capacity during the war and rendered incalculable service in a great variety of fields. No one wanted to see a recrudescence of militancy when the war was over.

It was accordingly decided in Parliament to submit this and all the other franchise issues together to a panel of Members drawn from all parties and presided over by the Speaker, with a request to draw up an agreed scheme. This Speaker's Conference met at the end of 1916 while the war was still in progress and issued its report in February 1917. Among other changes it proposed to confer the vote upon all men and upon a limited number of women. The women had to satisfy two conditions: they had to be over thirty years of age, and they must either themselves be qualified to be local government electors or be the wives of men who were. The report was accepted by the House of Commons and a Bill embodying its recommendations passed through all its stages in both Houses with only slight opposition, and became the law of the land. The enfranchisement of women was an accomplished fact.

The women's societies celebrated the victory with enthusiasm. It did not trouble us overmuch that absolute equality had not been attained. We recognized that it was in accordance with British tradition to proceed a step at a time. Besides, the total number of women electors, some eight and a half millions, would be several times greater than that we had originally fought for, and we knew that it would be a powerful leverage to obtain reforms of all kinds. The fact that there would be at the same time a male electorate of some thirteen millions did not concern us because we had never regarded the question as a battle between women and men.

Ten years later the final step was taken. I was then myself a Member of Parliament, and it was in answer to a question of mine that Mr Baldwin, as Prime Minister, made his announcement that his Government intended to introduce and carry through a Bill to enfranchise all women.

I can imagine how Winston Churchill would have done it in his place. He would certainly have used words most carefully chosen to match the historic significance of the decision and he would have relished the opportunity that it would have given him to stand as a champion of democracy. What Mr. Baldwin actually said was that he was afraid he had lost the paper on which the answer was written but that he remembered it sufficiently to state the substance of it, which he then proceeded to do!

However, the essential thing was the decision itself, and it was a foregone conclusion that the Bill embodying it would become law. In the result, there was practically no opposition, as few M.P.s cared to affront the coming new electors by speaking or voting against them. A number of Members took part in the debate and recounted their life-long devotion to the cause and the support which they had always rendered to it in Parliament. My recollection did not always accord with theirs. I made, as befitting a back bencher, a short speech to a House, which had emptied for dinner, stressing the importance of the occasion which had for the first time made women an equal sovereign half of the nation.

What has been the effect of the enfranchisement of women? Have the hopes and expectations of those of us who worked for it been attained or surpassed? Have any or all of the fears of those who opposed it been realized?

Let me begin by recalling what these different prognostications were. We claimed, first and foremost, that it would give women a higher status, and, as a result, fundamentally alter the attitude of the sexes towards one another, or, to put it in the words of John Stuart Mill, that it would end 'the subjection of women'. We contended further that, by giving women the key to political power, it would enable them to obtain equality of opportunity, to improve their economic position, and to procure the enactment of reforms of benefit to themselves to children and to the community as a whole. We said finally that civilization would no longer be directed exclusively from the masculine viewpoint, but in the better perspective of male and female informed opinion.

The anti-suffragists said that it would drag women out from their natural sphere of the home into the arena of political strife, and impose on them obligations which the vast majority of them were unwilling to assume. They foretold that it would create dissension between husbands and wives. They did not believe that it would improve women's wages and conditions, because these depended on the economic law of supply and demand. They feared that women, when they formed the majority of the electorate, would outvote men on matters of home and foreign policy, and that men would have to bear the brunt of these decisions taken contrary to their more experienced judgment. To these gloomy prophecies some of the men among them added the whisper that a regimen of women would impose on them impossibly strict standards of sex morality.

I think it will be generally agreed that dissensions in the home have not increased on account of the fact that women now have votes for Parliament as well as for local government, which they had before. I remember a woman telling me that she had 'neutralized' her husbands'

vote at the last election by giving hers to the opposing candidate, but her remark caused amusement and not anger in the family. The political duties of an elector are not onerous or obligatory, but it may sometimes happen that a husband is disappointed that his wife is out attending a political meeting when he would have preferred to find her at home. On the other hand, many husbands are glad that their wives can discuss political questions with a better understanding than previously.

Apart from war work, which arises only indirectly from the fact that women are now full citizens, the only additional obligation which has been imposed on them, so far as I am aware, is that of service on a jury. This is no doubt irksome and inconvenient to many women as it is to most men. On the other hand, a number of women have welcomed the opportunity of taking this share in the civic life of the country and of introducing a woman's viewpoint into judgments on their fellow citizens, particularly where children's interests are concerned. I do not think there have been any complaints of women's work as jurymen, though some judges and some litigants have protested against their taking part in certain cases.

No separate record is kept at elections of the effect of the votes cast by men and women respectively, and therefore it is impossible to tell how far, if at all, any candidate may be said to owe his election to the vote of one sex in particular. But judging from public meetings and from the results of 'straw' votes, there is no reason to suppose that opinions on matters of general policy have been divided on sex lines.

In the field of sex morality the results probably came as a surprise to most people. It is true that a nearly equal standard between men and women has been introduced, both in the law of divorce and in the public attitude towards those whose sexual relations are outside the marital state. But in the main this has meant not greater rigidity but greater tolerance. With it has come according to the view of most of those competent to judge, a considerable reduction in prostitution. Society, I venture to think, has by no means said the last word on the whole of this intimate and intricate question of sex relationship, either as to the code of optimum behaviour or as to the treatment of those individuals who break it. But I should have supposed that there could be no doubt of the paramount necessity that in reaching a decision men and women should have an equal voice.

As regards economics the results have been mixed. A large number of additional occupations have been thrown open to women. They can be M.P.s and Ministers of the Crown, but the House of Lords still closes its doors to them. They can be barristers and solicitors. They can serve in the highest grades in the Civil Service and local government with the exception of the diplomatic service and the defence departments. They are actually, in the present war, recognized members of the fighting services. On the other hand, they have not secured equal pay for equal work except in a few instances, and they are still liable to be turned out of their jobs on marriage. I think we must be prepared to admit that, though in some respects progress has been greater and more rapid than we expected, in the main matter of economic equality it has not gone so far or so fast. No doubt it will have to be pursued in future on the industrial as well as on the political plane.

The most striking fulfilment of our prophecy has come in the matter of infantile mortality, which has actually fallen from around 120 per thousand at the time we were agitating for the vote to between 50 and 60 today. It is true that some part of the reduction took place in the years before the vote was actually won but we never supposed that it was a mere ballot box matter. The interest that was aroused by the agitation, and the desire to appease women by dealing with questions in which they were known to be particularly interested, naturally produced results of the same kind as their actual enfranchisement. On the other hand, maternal mortality for a long time showed no sign of improvement, and it is only in the last year or so, no doubt as a result of recent legislation combined with widespread concern, that it has begun to be reduced. It is too early to judge how far this downward trend will persist.

The claim that widowed mothers should receive a pension on account of their dependent children was substantially met in the contributory pensions scheme, carried through in the middle twenties, and there is no doubt that social insurance generally, so far as women are concerned, has been largely affected by the fact of their citizenship. It will probably also be generally conceded that the separation allowances for wives (and reputed wives) of men serving in the two world wars would have been on a less generous scale but for the agitation which resulted in securing the vote. I think account must also be taken of the fact that M P's cannot fail to pay greater attention to the individual grievances of women in their constituencies when they know that they depend on their votes to secure re-election.

But it is, after all, in the matter of status that women have secured most from their enfranchisement. This by its nature does not admit of statistical proof. It is only for those who have lived through the periods, before and after, to give their impressions. In my mind there exists no shadow of doubt on the matter and I invite those who differ from me to take the opportunity of looking at contemporary pictures of British women in the closing years of the nineteenth century. They will see on the faces of most of the women of the upper and middle classes of that period a look of boredom expressing the fact that the main current of life had passed them by: they will see women of the working classes in drab clothes, old beyond their years, and exhausted by the unequal struggle of life. Then let them go out into the streets and look at the upstanding women of today of all ages and of all classes. They cannot fail to note the contrast.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Pre war life—Links with Germany—Outbreak of war—Death of Keir Hardie—A visit to U.S.A.—Women at the Hague—Union of Democratic Control—E. D. Morel—Lees Smith—Candidature in S. Aberdeen—Peace by negotiation—A levy on capital—Sydney Arnold—Bernard Shaw—Conscientious objector—Work on a farm—The armistice

WAR came in 1914 like a bolt from the blue. Only a few days before it happened the very idea of it seemed quite fantastic. Emmeline and I



had been making plans for a tour round the world. We had already taken our passages across the Atlantic, and were on the point of booking them across the Pacific. We were sitting at lunch in our garden at Holmwood, towards the end of July, when one of the party referred to the recent murder of an Austrian Archduke\*. It seemed that it was giving rise to grave disquiet in diplomatic circles. But to us, as to other ordinary men and women, it appeared only as a little cloud on the horizon—no bigger than a man's hand'. Within a week it was to darken the whole European sky and engulf us all in war.

I do not suppose that anyone who has grown up since 1914 can ever fully appreciate the confident sense of stability which prevailed before that date. Though I had travelled widely over the world I had never troubled to carry a passport, except once when I thought I was going to Russia. My wife did not possess one at all. When we went to Switzerland for winter sports we used to pass through France and Germany, and were only made cognizant of the frontiers by a cursory customs examination. Not only English gold sovereigns but English £5 notes and even English *cheques were accepted willingly by foreign hotels and shopkeepers*, at the rates of exchange which had remained constant for many years—about 25 French or Swiss francs or 20 German marks to the pound. We frequently brought back with us foreign notes and small silver change, and kept them till a year or two later, when we might be going to the same country again.

The ease and lack of formality attaching to foreign travel is illustrated by the following true story of a cousin of mine. She had made all arrangements for a prolonged pleasure trip to a distant part of the world. Arrived at the railway station with her luggage, she discovered to her annoyance that she had come twelve hours too soon for her train. She walked along the platform and read an advertisement of another trip to an entirely different part of the world, starting several hours earlier. She went straight to the travel agency, changed all her tickets, and was off on the new journey. She stayed away four years!

Many of my acquaintances married foreigners, and it made little difference to their life which country they resided in. Newspapers and books of all nations circulated freely throughout the world. International conferences of all kinds, commercial, scientific and political, were constantly taking place. In particular, socialist parties in the various States kept up regular communication with one another, and projected common action. It had begun to look as though any conflicts which might arise in the future would not be between nations but between classes, and would be on political rather than racial lines.

Emmeline and I had many contacts with Germany and Germans. She had been to school in Wiesbaden. I had paid several visits, before I was married, to the home of some German ladies, who lived on an island in the Rhine near Coblenz and took paying guests who wanted to learn German. They taught me the ways of the country, and incidentally

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\* He was, of course, the heir presumptive to the Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria Hungary.

initiated me into the excellent card game for three players—'Scat' I could not help being amused at the respect they had for officers of their Army and at the way they talked of the Kaiser with bated breath. But in other respects I found their outlook and their life very similar to those of an English family.

After our marriage, Emmeline and I stayed there again, and she revisited her old schoolmistress at Wiesbaden. We also spent a delightful holiday in Nuremberg and cycled to the charming old town of Rothenburg, receiving a friendly greeting from its inhabitants. We attended a Wagner Festival at Bayreuth, and twice went to Oberammergau, where we stayed at the house of Anton Lang, who took the part of Christ in the famous Passion play. On the first occasion, the year preceding the play, Anton's sister recognized us at once on our arrival, as she had been present at one of our suffrage demonstrations in Hyde Park, and when we went back the following year to attend the play we found that Frau Lang had decorated our bedroom in the purple, white, and green of the W S P U. We also had happy associations with Innsbruck, the capital of the Austrian Tyrol, and were present at the Andreas Hofer centenary there. The charm and simplicity of these German and Austrian peasant folk attracted us very much.

Another direct link with these countries was formed by our work for votes for women. A parallel league to ours existed in Germany, and a contingent from it marched in one of our London processions and attended an Albert Hall meeting. Several of these women have remained our friends through life. On the Labour side we had no direct personal contact, but Jaurès of France and Bebel of Germany were household words to us, and Keir Hardie and others of my British labour friends used to tell me of the international conferences that were being held, and of how it was hoped that the solidarity in the labour ranks would be strong enough, if ever the time came to prevent their countries from going to war with one another.

It is true that there had been 'incidents' which had given rise to anxiety—between the British and French over Fashoda, between the British and Russians over the Dogger Bank, between the British and Germans over Agadir, and between the Austrians and Russians over the annexation by the former of Bosnia-Herzegovina. There was also continuous tension over 'spheres of influence' and the parcelling out of Africa. But one way or another a settlement had always been reached without recourse to arms. I had seen no war in Western Europe in my lifetime, for the last of them, that between France and Prussia, had ended in the year I was born (1871). Even in that, Britain had stayed outside the conflict. It was natural to suppose that diplomacy would find a way to deal with this murder, by a Serbian, of the Austrian Archduke without plunging the peoples of Europe, who had no quarrel with one another, into what seemed like a civil war.

So life went on quite normally in England. The plans for August holidays continued to be made. Many people left for a pleasure trip on the Continent. On Sunday, August 2, Emmeline and I drove down to Littlehampton for the day, and it was there for the first time that we were confronted with anything unusual. Tendering a £5 banknote to pay for our lunch at an hotel, we were surprised to be told that the manage-

ment was not prepared to give us change,\* and we had to scrape together the requisite amount in silver. Next day, however, the Bank Holiday excursion trains to the seaside were run as usual and were filled with carefree crowds. Emmeline and I stayed quietly at our house in Holmwood.

Meanwhile, events on the Continent had been moving with extraordinary rapidity. The militarists in Russia under the Czar, in Austria under the Emperor Franz Joseph, in Germany under the Kaiser, got the upper hand. Austria made impossible demands on Serbia, Russia began to mobilize, Germany counter mobilized. British Labour made an effort to rally the international Labour movement, but it was too late. The German Labour Party failed to put up any effective opposition to the call to the colours. Jaurès, the French socialist, was murdered. The French began to mobilize. Ultimatums were sent and their time limits expired.

There were, of course, no broadcasts in 1914 but as the day of August 3 wore on, rumours began to spread that Britain would become involved. Emmeline and I hurried up to London with the vague idea that we might get together with others and do something about the situation. When we got there we found, as might have been expected, that we were mere straws upon the stream. That very day Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, had disclosed for the first time in Parliament that many months previously, unknown to the British people and unknown to the British Cabinet as a whole, but with the approval of Mr Asquith, the Prime Minister, he had gone a very long way towards pledging armed support to the French in the event of a conflict, and that 'Staff talks' had in fact been proceeding. All that had been made public was that the centuries-old hostility between France and Britain had been succeeded by a welcome friendship, and that for the purposes of diplomatic action a 'triple entente' of Britain, France, and Russia stood over against the 'triple alliance' of Germany, Austria, and Italy.

In these circumstances, now that war had actually broken out in Europe, the House of Commons took the view that Britain would be dishonoured if she failed to implement the understanding of her Foreign Secretary. The decision was rendered more nearly unanimous owing to the fact that the German Army was proceeding to invade Belgium, whose integrity had been specifically guaranteed by all the Great Powers in a treaty, now contemptuously referred to by the German Chancellor as a 'scrap of paper'. A British ultimatum was accordingly despatched on Tuesday, August 4. Late in the evening I went out into the streets and mingled with the crowds. The midnight hour struck. Everyone knew that from that moment we were at war with Germany.

The feeling prevailing throughout the country was one of surprise and astonishment. The British people had no enmity towards the

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\* Up to then there were no £1 notes in England, and gold sovereigns circulated freely. One of the first decisions of the Government in the emergency was to keep the banks closed for two additional days and in the meantime to withdraw gold from circulation and to print paper notes for £1 and 10s. They were issued by the Treasury and were popularly known as Bradburys because the inscription on them was signed by Sir John Bradbury, the head of the Civil Service, now Lord Bradbury. I was told when I went to the Treasury, later, that the first draft had run 'This note is legal tender for a pound'. Fortunately the mistake was discovered just in time.

German people 'A war without hatred' was how it was described by a prominent Liberal newspaper supporting the Government. Even the German Kaiser, with his bombastic ways, came in more for ridicule than for animosity. Nevertheless, for the same reasons that had actuated the House of Commons, there was a general disposition to line up behind the Government. My own personal attitude was highly critical. The war seemed to me to have started on the Continent without any sufficient cause and to mark a complete breakdown of statesmanship all round. I strongly resented the clandestine way in which Sir Edward Grey had in effect committed the British people in advance behind their back. But I too, in spite of my loathing of war, felt that, granted the circumstances as they were at the twelfth hour, a refusal to come to the help of France and Belgium would have been a breach of faith.

I chanced to run into Keir Hardie on a train journey shortly afterwards. All his plans of international Labour co-operation to avert war had come to nothing. But he spoke to me with the old light in his eye of how his own particular organization, the I.L.P., had remained true to his pacifist faith. It was the last time I saw him. His gentle spirit, inured to attacks upon himself, could not stand up to the hideous cruelties of war on others. Shortly afterwards he had a complete breakdown, and merciful death shielded him from the blows of those long four and a quarter years of mutual slaughter and growing hatred.

My wife and I thought our most useful work would be to help to organize women for posts of auxiliary service. This was all the more important in our view because the first effect of war was to create widespread unemployment, particularly among women. But Mr Asquith's Government discouraged the employment of women except as nurses, and refused even to make use of women doctors and surgeons, until their value had been amply demonstrated later in units attached to some of our allies. So when Emmeline received a cable from some influential women in the United States to come over and address a suffrage meeting in New York, there was nothing to prevent her from accepting the invitation. She went, and during the next few months took a major part in forming the American nucleus of the Women's International League.

I stayed in London, and tried to put my ideas into writing. I cast them in the form of an imaginative story called '1950', which was supposed to be written in retrospect by someone living towards the end of the century. I described many physical changes which I imagined had taken place in the thirty six years since 1914. Nations had acquired large fleets of aeroplanes. One machine had actually flown the double journey across the Atlantic in a single day. A new instrument which I called the teleoptikon enabled people to see what was taking place in a distant land. Girls were employed by the post office as telegraph messengers and were equipped with motor bicycles. A new 'element' had been discovered which was capable of developing a prodigious amount of energy.

In the first part of the book I described how a mine in Greenland, supposed to contain an abundant source of this element, nearly brought about a European war, and how it was only the discovery, at the twelfth hour, that the prospectors had made a fraudulent report that saved the situation. For, as the Prime Minister said to his Foreign Secretary,

"You really can't fight a war about a mine which doesn't exist" In the second part I told how the opponents of war created a society which they called 'The League of Nations' to help them to keep the world at peace They had against them imperialists and concession hunters and a powerful newspaper proprietor who, at a critical moment, distorted the speech of a foreign statesman in order to prejudice the people against friendship But the situation was saved by the arrival of a woman in an aeroplane, bringing the true version of the speech, and by its instant dissemination throughout the country

I never finished the story A literary friend to whom I showed it was somewhat critical, and, while I was considering what I should do about it, a cable arrived from my wife suggesting that I should join her in the United States and escort her home It is an interesting commentary on the difference between 1914 and 1939 that the journey presented no special difficulties, and that it never even occurred to me to arm myself with a passport I found my wife in the thick of a campaign of meetings in many of the principal cities of the U S A , and we worked our way across the continent to the Pacific and, travelling north, came back across Canada The progress of the European war was reported at great length in the papers of the Eastern States and of the Middle West, but I found in California that interest in it was not considered sufficient to justify even a single column on the front page

We came back to Europe in a Dutch ship sailing to Holland In this neutral country a prominent woman suffragist, Dr Aletta Jacobs, had determined, like Lysistrata in the play by Aristophanes, to try to find a way to stop the slaughter of the young men of Europe, and to formulate the basis of a lasting settlement She had called a world conference of women at the Hague, and had invited, to meet her there, women from the neutral and belligerent countries Her invitation had been widely accepted, and a massive contingent was proceeding from America to take part in it It was on the ship that carried this party that we secured our passage It was christened in the American papers, 'The Peace Ship'

Leading the United States delegation was Jane Addams, already well known as the founder of the University Settlement of Hull House in Chicago and for her other social activities I had met her on several occasions and Emmeline had been associated with her during her recent campaign in the United States The voyage presented the opportunity of coming in closer contact with her unique personality Wise, patient and tolerant, she presided with calm dignity over our informal gatherings on the ship, and later at the main conference at the Hague At its conclusion she carried its resolutions in person to the heads of most of the belligerent States In the years to come she was at different times to be subjected to high praise and widespread abuse She was to be awarded the Nobel Prize But no personal considerations affected her for as it seemed to me she had merged her separate self in the ocean of cosmic suffering

There were no incidents in the voyage across the Atlantic, but as we approached the Cornish coast we were hailed by a British trawler The ship's papers were examined and a German seaman was taken off When last we saw him, he was drinking a cup of coffee given to him by his

British captors Arrived off Deal, we came to a dead stop The North Sea had been closed, we were told, by order of Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty For four days we remained immobilized. Miss Addams sent a telegram to the American Ambassador in London A reply came to her saying that it was outside his province to assist her in the matter Within a couple of hours we were steaming ahead! Diplomacy frequently works in this indirect way!

It was May 1 when we arrived at Rotterdam, and the Americans went on at once to the Hague Emmeline and I had first to pay a visit to the British Consul, who obligingly provided us with passports—the fore-runners of those we have carried ever since on all our foreign journeyings Armed with them, we were soon speeding on our way to rejoin our comrades The diminutive railway carriages and the intimacy of the landscape on that lovely spring afternoon contrasted strikingly with their counterparts in the great western land from which we had so recently come

Next day the conference took shape Nearly every country was represented, in spite of the fact that the authorities in the belligerent nations had prevented the bulk of their delegates from arriving As I looked down from the gallery on the mixed gathering and heard the speeches and read the resolutions which were passed without opposition, I said to myself "How like one another these women of different races are in all essentials, how much they have in common how inconceivable it is that their menfolk should be engaged in mortal combat, and that they themselves should be expected to hate one another!"

Women from the belligerent nations were appointed to take the resolutions to the neutral Governments while women of the neutral States carried them to the warring Governments They had a more cordial reception than might have been anticipated, but no real hope was held out to them that the cloud of war would be lifted We ourselves stayed on a few days in Holland, where public meetings had been arranged My wife and women of other nationalities addressed them, each in her own language, and the Dutch, excellent linguists as they are, came in considerable numbers to listen and applaud After that, with some difficulty, we found a ship that would take us to England, and for the remaining three and a half years of war were unable to leave our own shores

Very shortly after I got home, I was invited to join the Union of Democratic Control and become its treasurer As its name implies, it was founded to insist that foreign policy should in future, equally with home policy, be subject to the popular will The purpose was sometimes described negatively as the abolition of secret diplomacy, but of course no one was foolish enough to suppose that the delicate negotiations between foreign Governments could be carried on in the full blaze of publicity The intention was that no commitments should be entered into without the peoples being fully informed and their approval obtained By a natural transition, the objects of the Union came to include the formulation of terms of a durable settlement, on the basis of which the war might be brought to an end As my own mind was moving in the same direction I readily accepted the invitation This brought me into direct association with a number of men most of whom were already well

known to me, and all of whom played a considerable part in my later life

The prime mover was E D Morel, whose passion was the suppression of injustice. He had written a great book about the cruelties of the Belgian rule in the Congo. It had won him the intense hostility of interested parties, but it had achieved a large part of his purpose in exposing the scandal and obtaining a measure of reform. He was now equally determined to bring home to the common people of all lands the sinister forces which lay behind war. The fact that he was of French descent and had the Latin temperament gave a fire to his oratory that roused his audiences to strong feelings of agreement or disapproval. He was in after years to enter the House of Commons as a Labour Member by defeating Mr Winston Churchill in Dundee.

Another active member of the committee was Ramsay MacDonald, who, before the war, had already become a prominent figure in Parliament. As secretary of the Labour Party and an astute organizer his relation to Keir Hardie was something like that later of Stalin to Lenin among the Bolsheviks. He had not been popular with the Left Wing, who looked upon him as a compromiser, they were therefore all the more surprised by his vigorous attitude on the war. In non Labour circles he was now widely denounced as an enemy of his country, but his unrivalled knowledge of international affairs and his keen political brain made him a powerful protagonist. Inside the committee of the Union of Democratic Control, when difficult decisions had to be made, I generally found myself in agreement with his objective outlook.

Most of the other members of the Executive Committee, with the exception of Norman Angell and Mrs Swanwick, were all established Liberal politicians and old school or college mates of my own. Charles Trevelyan was the eldest son of Mr Gladstone's Irish secretary and had been himself a member of Mr Asquith's Government. He had resigned at the outbreak of war in opposition to Sir Edward Grey's policy. Arthur Ponsonby had been page to Queen Victoria and had been trained for the diplomatic service, but had found himself in disagreement with its attitude and methods. Charles Roden Buxton was the son of Sir T Fowell Buxton, the Governor of Victoria in Australia. Lees-Smith had attended my Dunkin lectures on economics at Oxford and was now not only an M P but a corporal in the British Army. They were all later to become members of the Labour Party in Parliament, and several of them were my colleagues in the Government of 1929-31.

At first we were able to hold public meetings everywhere and state our case, but as time went on, an organized opposition was worked up by a section of the Press, which represented us as opponents of the brave men who were fighting the country's battles. Our meetings in London were accordingly broken up. I remember one in particular where, as chairman, I was thrown from the platform. It was a novel but not a very alarming experience, as the floor was only a few feet below. In the middle of the struggle a young soldier called out "Don't hurt the old man." I heard the epithet with some amusement. I was only 43.

After that we came to the conclusion that there was no useful purpose in holding meetings where they only served to inflame the public mind, and we carried on our propaganda in other places and in other ways.

Some of our best support came from inside the Army. Soldiers on leave came to tell us that many of the more thoughtful of their colleagues shared our views. One young officer paid us several visits. On the last occasion he said to us 'Your principles are now so firmly established that if I have to die now I shall die happy.' He went back to the Front and shortly afterwards was killed in action.

Lees-Smith, in the course of a speech in the House of Commons on December 21, 1916, made the following statement:

"I have recently returned from France, where I have been for the past seven or eight months, it is true in a very subordinate position in the ranks, but nevertheless in one in which I have been able to form some judgment of what ordinary soldiers, the rank and file, are saying and thinking when they are among themselves. I wish to tell the House most emphatically that I am absolutely certain that if you put it to the men out there whether, provided we can get guarantees that our honourable obligations will be fulfilled, we should make a serious effort to negotiate, such a proposition would be carried not only by an overwhelming majority, but with practical unanimity."

The Government and the House of Commons, however, took an entirely different view, and Mr Lloyd George, who had become Prime Minister, declared in favour of the 'knock out-blow'.

We decided to test public opinion at a succession of by elections. I myself went to fight South Aberdeen in the spring of 1917 as a 'peace by negotiation' candidate. The campaign ran into nearly five weeks, which the bitterly cold weather made particularly trying. On the whole I received a good hearing, which was also extended to my wife, to Lees-Smith, Ponsonby, Pat Dollan\* and others. But the advent of Ramsay MacDonald created a storm, and the meeting which he was to have addressed was dispersed in uproar. Once, when I was speaking in the open air, some of the crowd started throwing coal at me from a near by heap. "Stand in front of that glass window," said my agent, who was a canny Scot. I followed his advice and the missiles ceased!

I have before me as I write a specimen of the literature I put out during the election. Here is the case I endeavoured to make:

"There is a choice between two policies. The first is peace by negotiation; the second is going on with the war for months and months—perhaps for years. Peace by negotiation does *not* mean going to the Kaiser and asking what terms of peace he will graciously give us and accepting those terms. That would be peace by surrender. Peace by negotiation means a peace in which Great Britain and her Allies would insist upon certain irreducible terms and come to a settlement with regard to the others. It is sometimes said that a peace made to-day would be a German peace. Why? Germany, it is true, is in possession of some of the Allied territory in Europe. But the Allies have command of the seas, they have taken 800,000 square miles of German territory in Africa and elsewhere, they have

\* Recently Lord Provost of Glasgow



established a blockade of Germany and the German people are in great misery from want of food. A peace made to-day would not be a German peace but a peace favourable to the Allies."

I defined the irreducible terms as the independence and restoration of Belgium, the evacuation of France and Serbia and the other Balkan States, Trentino for Italy\* and a free passage through the Dardanelles for Russia.

I proceeded to give my reasons for believing that these terms might be secured, and went on

"Suppose, however, that the rulers of Germany are not prepared to make peace along these lines, then our attempt to get them to do so will have done us nothing but good. At present the German people are persuaded by their rulers that our object in going on with the war is to crush them utterly. And so they are all standing together in the war against us. But if the people learn that they could end the war to-day on moderate terms, but that their rulers will not consent, then we shall drive a wedge through the ranks of the Germans and turn the people against their rulers, and it will be much easier for us to beat them."

On the other hand, I argued that an acceptance of such a peace would be a defeat for the German military party, one of whose organs had recently declared that if Germany did not secure the coast of Flanders she would have lost the war.

Finally I asked what was the alternative, and what would be the sequel to a protracted struggle in which hundreds of thousands of British soldiers would be killed and a vast additional war debt incurred. I gave my answer as follows

"At the end it *may* be that we are able to inflict a crushing blow on Germany, but it is not possible to destroy a nation and so keep it permanently down. Napoleon tried it with Prussia a hundred years ago and failed. Bismarck tried it fifty years ago with France and failed. However severely we punish Germany, whatever restrictions we impose, nothing can prevent some future generations of Germans rising again against us if they are all animated by the sense of burning injustice and furious revenge."

On polling day the electorate gave a decisive verdict against the policy I was advocating and in favour of continuing the war till Germany was crushed. I secured only 333 votes, while my successful opponent polled 3283 and an Independent National 1507. But I left many new personal friends in the constituency when I returned South to my Surrey home.

About this time German Zeppelins began to come across and some of them dropped a few bombs. One fell in a building just behind my

\* Italy had been persuaded to break with Germany and Austria and come into the war on the side of the Allies. The pact relating to this formed one of the secret treaties subsequently published by the Bolsheviks.

London flat in Clement's Inn and did a slight amount of damage Shortly afterwards, an Air Ministry official called on me, and said that as Clement's Inn was wanted for the headquarters of the Ministry I must vacate my premises in a week I secured an extension of time and found a new flat in Lincoln's Inn, to which the Government moved my furniture and belongings There, too, there had been a bomb, which had fallen near the Chapel Another fell a few weeks later in Stone Buildings only some 40 yards from my rooms in Old Square, where I was in residence at the time I remember noticing that in accordance with scientific theory I felt the repercussion a split second before I heard it It made a hole in the roadway some six feet square and about four feet deep, and pock-marked the adjoining offices The only ill effect that I suffered was that the soot came down my chimney!

Apart from the major issues of the war, I had for some time past been considering the methods by which it was being financed In the issue of the *Royal Economic Journal* for December 1915, I had dealt with the popular fallacy that lack of money was likely to bring the war to an early end, and had strongly criticized the practice of getting the banks to lend money to their clients to relend to the Government I showed that this was pure inflation, that it merely enriched the banks, and that the public was mulcted twice over—at the time in enhanced prices, and afterwards by having to pay interest on the debt I now turned my attention to the financial situation which was likely to arise when the war was over

The popular opinion was that the country as a whole was in some mysterious way throwing the burden of paying for the war on to posterity, and that its capital resources were being substantially reduced I took a contrary view I held that the country was of necessity paying for the war *at the time*, in the services of its soldiers, sailors, and airmen, in the labour of its munition workers, in the physical deprivations which its citizens were enduring Its capital was in the main suffering no diminution The real danger was that a state of internal strain was being created owing to the rapid growth of the national debt and the rising rate of interest After the war, the soldiers returning from the front and the wealth-less classes generally would be loaded down, for years to come, with the necessity of meeting the claims of the bondholders, before satisfying their own needs and developing the resources of the nation

I therefore advocated that at the end of the war there should be a graduated levy on capital sufficiently large to sweep away the whole or a great part of the national debt The book which I wrote embodying these views roused considerable public attention and ran into three editions, the first of which was published in April 1918 While it was in the press, Sydney Arnold\* who had been a stockbroker and was then a Liberal Member of Parliament, quite independently made a speech in the House of Commons on almost identical lines Our common interest naturally brought us together, we became close friends, and later were colleagues in the second Labour Government My advocacy of the capital levy brought me also in contact with George Bernard Shaw He regarded the scheme as impracticable The Fabian Society staged a debate between him and myself which took place in the Essex Hall

\* Now Lord Arnold of Hale.

It was not until the middle of 1918 that my age group came within the Conscription Act and I was called up. I was then 46. Believing as I did that the war could and should be brought to an end by a negotiated peace, I could not very well go out to fight for Mr. Lloyd George's knock-out blow. I accordingly went before a tribunal in Dorking as a conscientious objector. I had thought the matter over very carefully and had come to the conclusion that I was not prepared to say that I was against war in circumstances which seemed to me to justify a resort to arms. I was therefore one of those who tribunals elsewhere had decided were political and not strictly conscientious objectors. Nevertheless the Clerk to the Council told the tribunal that he knew I had held my views for a considerable time, and the military representative said that he did not particularly 'want this man'. So I was awarded exemption conditional on my doing work of national importance, and work on the land was indicated.

I was at first doubtful whether I was justified in taking this comparatively easy way out while other men were facing the horrors of the trenches as soldiers or alternatively the prison cell as conscientious objectors. But I came to the conclusion that I could not very well refuse to help to grow food for the nation and after some trouble with the directing committee in London who did not seem to me to be clear whether they wanted to punish me or to use my services to the best advantage, I got a job as a labourer at a wage of 27s 6d a week on a farm found for me by my friend Hankinson. As it was partly in Sussex this satisfied the committee that I should be put to sufficient inconvenience but I was able to live at my own house and bicycle the six miles to and fro each day.

The farmer was a delightful man and I soon became genuinely attached to him and his family. In addition to the unskilled work which I had no difficulty in doing, I used to help him with filling up the numerous forms which he had to send in from time to time to the authorities. I remember that on one occasion I had been gleaming for him and had brought back a sack of bruised wheat. I asked him how much he got for it. He said:

Good wheat is controlled and fetches 84s, but this damaged stuff is uncontrolled and I get 120s for it! One of his other labourers was a Cockney artisan who had been sent to the farm to recover his health. I used sometimes to discuss politics with him, and we still occasionally correspond.

The war had now run for over four years. Russia had fought to a standstill, had had two revolutions, and had been forced to accept the humiliating treaty\* of Brest Litovsk. The United States had come into the war, and was daily increasing her military and industrial effort. The German people were growing more and more weary of war and its privations and the German soldiers saw the hope of victory daily receding. President Wilson then did what we had in vain asked our own Government to do. In his famous Fourteen Points† he laid down the basis of a

\* A friend of mine tells me he was present when Lenin and Trotsky were discussing this treaty before it was agreed on. Trotsky said it was too dishonourable to be accepted. But said Lenin our soldiers have voted for it. Voted! said Trotsky. They have had no chance of voting. Oh yes, said Lenin, they have voted for it with their feet. He referred of course to the fact that they had retreated.

† Referring to these Clemenceau is alleged to have declared: *Mass le bon Dieu a gué*

possible peace. These points, which bore a striking resemblance to the terms which the Union of Democratic Control had long enunciated, had an undoubted effect on German *morale*. By offering them an alternative to a continuation of a hopeless struggle they helped to sap their will to fight on. The German High Command asked for an armistice, and at eleven o'clock on the morning of November 11, 1918, the order to cease fire was given.

In London as the hour struck the whole population by common impulse left their workshops, their offices, and their houses and came out on to the street. I mingled with the dense throng. There was no sign of frothy exultation. The one thought appeared to be of thankfulness that the killing had come to an end, that loved ones could now return home, that hatred could be banished, that the work of destruction was ended, and the constructive rebuilding of the world could begin.

## CHAPTER XII

### IN SEARCH OF A SEAT

The coupon election—My wife's candidature—Sweeping Conservative gains—Divergent British views—The Treaty of Versailles—A lecture tour in U.S.A.—Justices Brandeis and Wendell Holmes—America rejects the League—*Why Prices Rise and Fall*—A new home—Andorra—Inactivity—*Light on the Path*—Defeat at Islington—European journey—Benes—A fight in Leicester—Churchill as an opponent—The count—M.P. at last

THE bells of Armistice Day had scarcely ceased ringing when a general election was announced. Mr Lloyd George and Mr Bonar Law had decided to 'cash in' on the national victory, and they issued a letter of commendation, popularly known as the 'coupon' to all candidates who stood on their ticket. Opposed to them were Mr Asquith's Liberals, and the Labour Party, which had been divided about the war but was united about the peace. Since the last election there had been a redistribution of seats, manhood suffrage with proxies for absent voters, and the enfranchisement of many millions of women. Many of the contests were three-cornered. Polling day was fixed for December 14, 1918, and the votes were to be counted on December 28.

As far back as April 1918 I had been adopted as the prospective Labour candidate for Hastings. I had made no secret of my views on the war and of my intention, in consequence, to refuse military service. I had visited the constituency several times since then and expounded the full Labour programme. But when I actually became a conscientious objector, and adverse comment was made in the press, I found disaffection expressing itself in the inner circle of my supporters. Accordingly I withdrew at the beginning of November, and as no other opportunity of fighting presented itself I was not a candidate at the general election.

In these circumstances my wife felt herself free to accept the invitation of the local Labour Party in the Rusholme division of Manchester to contest that seat in the Labour interest. She knew, of course, that there was little prospect of success. The local party had scarcely any

organization; and the Act making women eligible as candidates for Parliament had only just been passed. But she welcomed the opportunity to give public expression to her conviction that the kind of peace foreshadowed by the Government would bring disaster to our country and to Europe as a whole.

I spoke at a number of her meetings, but naturally many other contests also claimed my attention. Our personal friends rallied round her. In particular, she had the devoted assistance of Max Plowman, who, though better known as an author and poet, proved himself an effective organizer and a tower of strength to her in her campaign. A remarkable feature of the election was the support she received from soldiers, who spoke at her meetings, and canvassed and distributed leaflets on her behalf. When, a fortnight after election day, the absent soldiers' vote was added to the poll she came out second in the three-cornered contest, in front of the Asquithian Liberal candidate. But the verdict of the constituency and the general election had gone against us. In a sentence she summed up her view of the result: "The people have voted for another war."

Altogether the supporters of the Government secured no fewer than 523 seats out of a total of 707. Of these, 383 were Unionists, who therefore had a clear majority of the House. Mr Lloyd George's own following in the Coalition consisted of 127. Sinn Féin secured 73. Mr Asquith's 'free' Liberals were reduced to 34 and were at once dubbed the 'Wee Frees'. Labour increased its representation to 63. But Ramsay MacDonald suffered a bad defeat in West Leicester, and most of my other personal friends failed to secure election. By this result the great Liberal majority of 1906 was finally destroyed, and from that time onward, with two short intervals, right up to 1940, the government of the country was in the hands of the Conservative Party.

problems I was in full sympathy with this programme and supported it in speech and writing

The Conservative elements regarded the Socialist Governments of Central Europe with suspicion and that of Russia with extreme repugnance. They wanted a punitive peace, and they wanted Germany 'to be squeezed till the pips squeaked' to pay for the war. One hundred Coalition M.P.s telegraphed to Mr. Lloyd George, who was at the peace conference with President Wilson and M. Clemenceau, urging him to be stern with Germany. They induced the Government to send arms in support of the counter-revolution in Russia, and some of them would have liked to carry Britain into war to fight against Lenin's Bolshevik Government.

In May 1919 came the Treaty of Versailles. I welcomed the formation of the League of Nations and of its satellite the I.L.O. (International Labour Organization), but the other main provisions of the treaty I thought disastrous. In the territorial clauses, placing millions of Germans outside the new boundaries of Germany, I saw the seeds of future war, though I did not suppose it would come in my time. The financial clauses, claiming vast sums as reparations, I regarded as contrary to the terms of the armistice. Moreover, as an economist I knew them to be impossible of fulfilment. They would only serve therefore to distract attention from the real question as to who, inside our own country, was to pay off the war debt. But stupidest of all in my opinion was the inclusion of a declaration placing on Germany the sole responsibility for the war. Whatever the actual merits, it served no useful purpose. It brought to the Allies neither material gain nor additional security, and signed, as it was, by the German Government under duress, it carried no conviction, and was certain to be repudiated as soon as circumstances allowed. Its historical parallel was the decision of the ancient Romans to pass the defeated Sabines under the Caudine Forks.

In the autumn of 1919, I was invited to join a party of Left Wing politicians on a lecture tour to the United States, and I readily accepted. It proved a most interesting visit. I gave a number of different lectures to a great variety of audiences. One of my largest was at Lehigh, where I lectured to the whole University and half the town, in the great college chapel. The most influential was the Quill Club in New York, when I spoke to some 200 business men and bankers on the solvency of Europe.

On the social side, also, I had a most enjoyable time. In New York I stayed with my friends Percy and Alice Jackson in their house on 57th Street and was made a temporary member of his club. I went down to the Henry Street Settlement near the Bowery, and attended a fine performance at the 'Neighbourhood' theatre organized by Alice Lewisohn. The actors were drawn from the cosmopolitan population of this famous section of the city. I stayed at Washington with my friend the librarian of Congress, and while there I attended the inaugural meeting of the I.L.O. I went north to Boston to meet the 20th Century Club, and south as far as Cincinnati, where I lectured at the Wise Centre organized by the Jewish community there. I attended a conference of politicians in St. Louis, who were trying to form a new Farmer-Labour Party. I revisited Hull House in Chicago and its president Jane Addams. I made the

appointed to investigate the taxation of war wealth and I, as a leading exponent of the proposal for a capital levy, was invited to give evidence and submit myself to cross-examination on it. I expressed the view that, in an economic sense, the war had already been paid for, at the time, by the exertions of the people. Therefore the existence at its close, of the huge national debt constituted an unreal situation which I contended ought to be relieved by imposing a levy on capital otherwise I foresaw a long continuance of heavy annual taxation and of the maldistribution of wealth. In its report, the Committee contented itself with stating that a levy on war wealth was practicable, and left the final decision to the House of Commons, which turned it down.

Shortly after this, I was commissioned by the Oxford University Press to write a short book on *Why Prices Rise and Fall*, for their series "The World of Today". It was well received and ran into a second edition. I reproduce a few sentences from a spirited and highly eulogistic review which appeared in the *Nation*, written, I believe, by Leonard Woolf.

"*Why Prices Rise and Fall* carries you straight into the limitless desert of the dismal science, into those arid regions inhabited by 'marginal increment', 'the law of increasing returns', 'the law of diminishing returns', 'economic rent', 'foreign exchanges'. Mr Lawrence shirks nothing, he takes his reader firmly by the hand and plunges him straight into the icy waters of economics, but he does it with such kindness and such skill with such simplicity and such evident enjoyment, that even the most timid and inexperienced will soon find himself making a stroke or two on his own account. We have never met with a book containing more instruction and argument to the square inch than this one and yet it remains eminently readable. The secret of Mr Lawrence's miracle is simply that he explains and argues almost entirely through concrete examples, and that his examples are chosen with great skill from events which are very near to the ordinary reader's everyday life at the moment. It sounds simple enough, but anyone who has experienced the difficulty of finding one apposite 'example' will be amazed by Mr Lawrence's unerring instinct for hitting the nail always precisely on the head."

That autumn my wife went on another lecturing tour to the United States. Before she left, she and I came to a decision to give up The Mascot, our country house in Holmwood. There were several reasons for this, of which the principal was that we wanted to simplify our life. Accordingly, we disposed of all our Holmwood property and bought a site in Peaslake. I designed a labour-saving cottage which we proposed to run without a staff of resident servants. The foundation stone was duly laid on March 24, 1921. In it we placed, as relics of the time, a few coins and a ration card left over from the war. On the outside of it we carved the ancient Sign of Life. (When later we found to our disgust that this symbol was adopted as the Swastika of the Nazis we had it cut out!) We came into residence there the following October, and ever since I have found it a pleasant relief from political life to take charge of

part of the cooking, which I regard as an extension of the chemistry experiments of my boyhood

I had a great deal of leisure in those years 1920, 1921 and 1922 I had expected to devote a considerable amount of time to nursing South Islington, but I failed to discover very much that I could do to introduce myself to the electorate It was largely a dormitory constituency, so that most of the men were away in the daytime, and wanted to stay at home in the evenings As a great proportion of the people lived in upper floors of converted mansions, they were almost inaccessible to visits or to hand delivered leaflets Moreover, as there were no halls of any size available for public meetings, the best I could do was to speak in the local schoolrooms from time to time During those years I did general propaganda work for the Labour Party all over the country I wrote another small book for the Oxford University Press and I lectured on the levy on capital

Since I left the University I had never had much time to keep up my lawn tennis, except at week-ends in my own garden or in those of my friends But after the war, my wife's brother, Tom Pethick, who had been an international hockey player and was still a great exponent of doubles play in lawn tennis, introduced me to the tournaments in the Isle of Wight, where he lived I entered with zest into these competitions, both there and in other places and, though I never got anywhere near winning one of the level events, I often got through a few rounds, and in the handicaps carried off several prizes It was interesting, too, to come up against many of the stars in the tennis world I myself belonged to the class of those of whom it may be said that we were great players compared with 'rabbits', and 'rabbits' compared with the great players But our middle position gave us a lot of fun

In the mixed doubles I frequently had as my partner Phyllis Floud, the wife of Sir Francis Floud, and one Whitsuntide she and her husband made up a party with us and three other friends to visit Andorra, the tiny republic which lies in the Pyrenees between France and Spain We stayed at Las Escaldas at the confluence of two gushing streams The scenery was enchanting, and the walk up to the mountain pass, which leads over into France, was the most invigorating I have ever taken The life of the people, too, interested us greatly They cultivated vineyards in terraces right up to the top of many of their hills, they bred horses, they wove blankets and a few of them made a living by smuggling tobacco over mountain byways into the neighbouring countries They had only a tiny one-roomed prison, and they did not remember when that was last used The land descended from father to eldest son and all the younger sons were expected to emigrate to prevent the country becoming congested

All this was very delightful, but I was far from satisfied I desired intensely to have something to do which I could regard as really worth while—some public work which would utilize to the full my powers and absorb all my energies As days went by and weeks became months and my fiftieth birthday was reached and passed, and I was still outside the main current of life's activity, a sense of frustration took hold of me and I became depressed Since then I have appreciated, more than I had ever done before, that lack of earnings is only one part of the bitter-



ness of the lot of the unemployed. Terribly galling is the sense of being unwanted, and of becoming a mere onlooker in the great struggle of life.

I fell to wondering what, after all, was the purpose of existence? I had always been attracted to oriental art and thought, and I now started to read some books on Eastern Wisdom—Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, Max Muller's translations of the Upanishads and a tiny book "*Light on the Path*"—written down by M C. There was something within me that responded instinctively to the profound ideas contained in these books and I found myself, as I read them, saying over and over again, 'Yes, that is true.' I learnt that the central conception of all deep religious thought is the same—that life is one and that our little selves are merely fragments of the great whole. To this doctrine I gave my unqualified assent. But those who have travelled the same road will know that it is one thing for the mind by a single process to register agreement, it is quite another for such a truth to be apprehended by the whole personality and to permeate all thought and action.

In the world of politics events moved rapidly in the autumn of 1922. The Coalition split in October. Mr Lloyd George ceased to be Prime Minister, and his place was taken by Mr Bonar Law. A dissolution followed immediately, and polling day was fixed for November 15. In South Islington there was a three-cornered contest. In spite of two years of nursing the seat I needed much help to get my name across, and a number of my outside friends rallied to my support. Mr Claude Rowntree came down specially from Scarborough to put in long days in the committee rooms, and Miss Maude Royden gave a rousing speech in a cinema which I was able to secure for the final Sunday before the poll. But by the time that the electorate as a whole woke up to the fact that a Labour candidate was in the field, a considerable number of them had already pledged themselves to one of my opponents.

I shall never forget the day of the count (November 16). It started in good time in the morning and went on, with an interval for lunch, well into the afternoon. So far as I was concerned it was a case of 'cutting off a dog's tail by inches.' As I wandered behind the tables and saw the three little piles of ballot papers—for Garland, Pethick Lawrence and Wiles—in front of each teller, mounting higher and higher, I began to notice that in the majority of them my pile was a little lower than the others. Sometimes I had a run of luck, and my spirits rose, only to be dashed immediately afterwards when the former disparity was more than restored. At last it was finished, and the returning officer declared the result. Garland 7877, Wiles 7352, Pethick Lawrence 6634.

I was bitterly disappointed. It seemed as if I was likely to have to wait a further four years before having another chance to contest a seat, and even then there was no certainty that I would be elected. When I read how well Labour candidates had done elsewhere, and that with 142 seats the Party strength in the House of Commons had been doubled, I felt my own exclusion all the more acutely. I was still in this frame of mind when I got a telegram inviting me to be one of the speakers at a

big meeting in London to celebrate the striking advance that Labour had made. I realized at once that I must accept, but I had a hard struggle with myself before I was ready to put my personal defeat in its proper perspective, and genuinely to rejoice in the results of the election. I won the struggle, and it acted like a tonic. From that day onward I never looked back.

I decided at once not to fight again in South Islington, and, on the advice of my friend Sydney Arnold, not to tie myself up with another constituency until an election was actually in sight. After Christmas my wife and I paid a visit to two of our suffrage friends in Munich.

The German mark was then in the middle of its downward course. Our excellent board and lodging cost us, in English money, 2s a day. Tram fares had just been put up before our arrival from 75 marks to 100 marks (nominally £3 15s to £5) for the shortest journey, and the day we left there was a notice up in the cars that in the following week they would become 150 marks. Our friends told us that a few months previously they had been left a little legacy. Rather extravagantly, as they felt, they had bought with it a few dozen bottles of wine, but now, having drunk the contents, they found that they could sell the empty bottles for more than the original sum!

The following Easter (1923) I decided on a more ambitious journey. My friend Hankinson was established in Buda Pest as the agent of the Friends for relief work, and at his invitation I visited him there and went on with him into Transylvania, which by the Treaty of Trianon had now become part of Roumania. I travelled via the Hook of Holland to Germany, and stayed the night in Leipzig. From there I went through Czechoslovakia to Vienna and down the Danube on the river boat to Buda Pest. In all, I crossed six frontiers, and as passports, customs and currency all had separate controls, the combined examination occupied over two hours on each occasion.

I thought the Hungarian capital the most lovely city in the world with the majestic Danube flowing between the low-lying streets of Pest and the lordly heights of Buda. But politically it was gravely disturbed. Not only was there a gaping internal chasm between wealth and starvation, with memories of the Communist regime of Bela Kun to fan the animosity, but external relations with neighbouring countries were thoroughly bad. The people of Hungary were smarting under the loss of territory, imposed on them by the peace treaty, and fanatically determined never to rest till the boundaries had been thrown back to their former lines.

I remember that I went one day with Hankinson to Estergom, where he had a relief centre. After midday dinner, while he was at work, I strolled up a hill behind the sanatorium, from the top of which I had a magnificent view of the Danube and of the scenery on the other side. A man came up with his little girl and I exchanged a few words with him in broken German, in which I referred to the different countries that were in sight. On the way down to my surprise he became aggressive and wanted to take me under arrest to the local police station, but I managed to escape from him and rejoin my friends. Apparently he had taken me for a spy.

On my way home I broke my journey at Prague and had a long talk

*Elector* and had it delivered by hand to every household by our own supporters

If Churchill troubled to think at all about my personality, he no doubt was of opinion that a prominent Liberal like himself was more likely to appeal to the robust radicalism of Leicester than a man who had been sent to prison in the suffrage agitation, had been a conscientious objector in the war, and was advocating a levy on capital. But I was *magnificently supported*. The local people worked splendidly. The fine organization originally built up by Ramsay MacDonald and his wife, when he was one of the two M P s for the undivided city, gave a very good account of itself. I remember calling together at the beginning of the election one of the ward committees. So large was the attendance that I thought a public meeting had been announced by mistake. Keen as they were on the Labour cause, and well disposed as they felt to me personally, I have no doubt that the presence of my redoubtable opponent served to inflame their enthusiasm.

Harry Peach, a man highly respected in Leicester, arranged an invitation meeting of his fellow business men for me to address on the capital levy. It was well attended and I was given a careful hearing. I do not suppose that I made any definite converts, but I know that many of them went away with the feeling that the question was worthy of further consideration. I also had the help of many outside Labour speakers. Muriel Matters, the suffragette who had chained herself to the 'grille' in the ladies' gallery of the House of Commons, won over all her audiences by the charm of her advocacy.

But not for the first time, my principal political support was my wife. She inspired the workers with her personality and by her stirring speeches at all my meetings she moved the hearts as well as the heads of the Leicester audiences. What was perhaps even still more important, she sensed the real danger of my position, and took steps to avert it. Winston Churchill was already a national figure whose name was in everyone's mouth. I was a comparatively unknown person. How was the requisite publicity for me to be obtained? She wrote an election song and insisted at every meeting that the audiences should sing it, and should promise to teach it to the children. The chorus rang

Vote vote vote for Pethuck Lawrence!  
Work, work work and do your best!  
If all workers we enrol, he is sure to head the poll,  
And we'll have a Labour man for Leicester West

It was set to the tune of 'Tramp, tramp, tramp'. The children soon got hold of it. They sang it in the streets, they sang it in their homes, and they sang it on election day outside the schools where the voting was going on. The Press said that they even bawled it into Churchill's ears as he went round the constituency. I have not the slightest doubt that this brilliant move was an important factor in the final result.

There was a third candidate in the field, Captain Instone, who stood as a Unionist and supported the full protectionist policy of Mr Baldwin, while Churchill and I both advocated the continuance of Free Trade. The previous election had also been three-cornered, and therefore it provided a valuable yardstick with which to measure the normal support

for each of the parties. Every morning when I got up I wondered whether Churchill would spring some clever surprise on the constituency which would work my discomfiture, and every night as I went to bed I said to myself, "So far, my predecessor's 4000 majority has not been impaired." I think *The Times* election correspondent must have formed the same opinion, when he came to Leicester a few days before the poll. For, referring to the fact that his visit coincided with the 393rd anniversary of the death of Cardinal Wolsey in Leicester Abbey, he suggested that though Churchill came to Leicester like a conqueror, he might suffer at my hands politically the same fate that the Cardinal was subjected to by Henry VIII.

I thoroughly enjoyed the excitement of the election and my natural energy proved quite equal to all the demands that were made upon it. All the same, I was not sorry when December 6 arrived, the day fixed for the poll. So long as it was light, I toured the constituency and made contact with my opponents. The children were everywhere in evidence singing my wife's election song. The count for all the city divisions followed in the de Montfort Hall, immediately after the close of the poll. This time I noticed that at nearly every table my pile of votes easily overtopped those of each of my opponents. The figures of the final result were as follows:

F. W. Pethick Lawrence	(Lab.)	13 634
W. S. Churchill	(L.)	9 236
Captain A. Instone	(U.)	7 696

Thus the 4000 Labour majority had been comfortably maintained. When the figures were announced Churchill came up to me and, congratulating me, said, "Well, anyhow it is a victory for Free Trade." Outside the hall the result was one of the first to be declared. It was regarded generally as among the most sensational of the whole general election.

## CHAPTER XIII

### BACK BENCHER

Life in Parliament—A billiard match—An odd dinner party—A political puzzle—Asquith's pronouncement—Labour in office—Procedure of the House—Maiden speech—Neville Chamberlain—Party allegiance—The Interparliamentary Union—The Zinoviev election—Narrow victory in Leicester

My election to Parliament changed the whole course of my life. Since then, with a short interval from 1931 to 1935, my activities have had their centre in the House of Commons. A large part of my waking hours has been spent within its precincts. My fellow Members have been my personal friends. My political education has been at their hands. The confidence they have reposed in me has been a constant source of satisfaction and has inspired me to give of my best. I have enjoyed witnessing and taking part in the battle of wits in the Chamber, and in the less spectacular encounters in the committee rooms upstairs. I have had most

pleasant associations with the two constituencies I have represented. Even when I have been out of the country, the prestige of a Member of the British House of Commons has gone with me, and has enhanced the value of my journeyings. Truly fate has been kind to me in providing this enlargement of my individual life.

Naturally the full realization of this did not come all at once. But I remember I was deeply thrilled when I paid my first visit to the House of Commons as a Member. Owing to the proximity of Christmas, Parliament was not to assemble until the New Year (1924), but I was invited to meet the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Bruce, at a small luncheon party in the House of Commons. The function had been arranged by Sir Howard d'Egville, the able secretary of the Empire Parliamentary Association. Of course I accepted, I went and was duly impressed.

The next repercussion of my election was curiously enough in the realm of sport. A 'benefit' billiard match was being arranged in which 12 leading professionals, playing successively in 12 sessions, conceded nearly two-thirds of the game to 12 amateurs. I was certainly not one of the best 12 amateur players in the country, but the publicity given to my political success secured me a place in the team. We played in the Burroughes Hall and I was pitted against John Diggle. I did not quite score my points on the handicap but thoroughly enjoyed the experience. On the aggregate contest the amateurs won. Some time later, I was asked to give away the prizes in a billiard match between leading jockeys. The match was preceded by a knock-out tournament of 200 up for eight of the best professionals which was all run through in less than two hours! I remember one heat in particular in which one of the players had only one turn, his opponent in his second visit to the table scored the whole of his 200 points!

An interesting function which took place in the House of Commons before Parliament met was an ex-prisoners' dinner for Members of Parliament, which was given by Mr. Scott Duckers. There were some 18 of us altogether, and we had been imprisoned for a variety of political causes. George Lansbury and I had 'done time' in connection with the militant suffrage movement. Some of the party were 'absolutist' conscientious objectors. Others, like Maxton, Kirkwood and E. D. Morel, the secretary of the Union of Democratic Control, had come up against D O R A (the Defence of the Realm Act). A final batch consisted of the Poplar Borough Councillors, including Susan Lawrence and John Scurr, who had disobeyed the law in the interests of the indigent folk in their borough. Naturally the conditions of prison life figured largely in our talk, and we laid plans to turn our experience to good account when prison reform was being discussed on the floor of the House. A still quainter dinner party was suggested later. It was to consist of all those of us who at one time or another had defeated Winston Churchill in a Parliamentary Election—'Jix' (Sir William Joynson-Hicks), Walter Runciman, E. D. Morel, Scrymgeour (the prohibitionist), O. W. Nicholson and myself. It would have been an odd assortment of personalities and opinions, but I expect we should have found a topic of common interest to discuss if the party had ever materialized. Unfortunately it never did.

The general election had created a novel Parliamentary situation. No one Party had an absolute majority in the House. Out of a total of 615, the Conservatives topped the list with 258 Members, Labour came next with 191, the Liberals had 158, and there were eight Independents. There was great uncertainty as to the probable course of events, and one rumour was that there would be a Coalition Government of Liberal and Labour. I thought this would destroy the integrity of our Party and was strongly against it. I wrote accordingly to Ramsay MacDonald, urging him not to be a party to this, and several other Labour M.P.s expressed similar opinions. He asked us to meet him to discuss the matter at the '1917' Club of which we were all members, and he then outlined his views. He had no intention, he said, of entering into a coalition, on the other hand it would be disastrous for Labour to insist on remaining in opposition. What he proposed was to form a Labour Government, if invited to do so, and if assured in advance of sufficient support. I was not wholly convinced at the time of the wisdom of this course, but in spite of what happened afterwards I am satisfied today that he was right.

The House met on January 8 and I took my place with my Labour colleagues on one of the back benches immediately to the left of the Speaker's Chair. The Chair itself was vacant, and the quaint traditional procedure was followed by which the Clerk pointed to one of the Members, who then rose and proposed that Mr Whitley should be the Speaker. After this motion had been seconded and approved by the House, the mover approached Mr Whitley, who, again according to tradition, feigned reluctance, but 'consented to the will of the House' and was led to the Chair. The swearing in of Members then began and lasted throughout the remaining sittings of that week. 'Woe betide a Member who should take any part in the proceedings before he was sworn in!' He would become subject to fantastic penalties. The real business did not begin until the following week, when the King opened Parliament in person in the House of Lords. I had secured, by ballot, a seat in the gallery to witness the ceremony, and a very gorgeous pageant it certainly was, with the 'peers in their red robes, the bishops with their lawn sleeves, the peeresses in their Court attire, and the 'faithful Commons' being summoned to attend. What made it all the more thrilling to me was that I was an essential part of it, part of the tradition which had been handed down from century to century, since the British Parliament first took its shape in the days that I had read about in my history books at school.

King George V had a fine voice and he always read his speeches with great gusto. It was difficult at times to remember that the words were really those selected by his Ministers. On this occasion a special political interest attached to the speech, for by that time it was generally known that the Ministers who had framed it would not be in office to implement the proposals it foreshadowed. The matter was not, however, put finally and publicly beyond question until the third day of the debate on the Address, when Mr Clynes moved an amendment on behalf of the Labour Party submitting 'that your Majesty's present advisers have not the confidence of this House'. It was then that Mr Asquith rose to declare the intentions of the Liberal Party. I had never been greatly impressed by his oratory at public meetings, which had seemed cold and formal,

but now I realized at once that he was in his element in addressing the House of Commons. He had, of course, an important pronouncement to make, but his speech was a masterpiece of exposition, every word of which added to the effect that he intended to produce. In common with the rest of the House I was held spellbound.

He went straight to the point. "I say at once that I propose to vote and to advise my friends to vote in favour of the amendment." No other course, he declared, would be compatible with the result of the election, in which the Government had sought a verdict in their favour from the electorate and had been refused it. He did not shirk the consequences. He had no intention for himself or his Party of accepting 'office without power'. He realized that it was the Labour Party which would step into the shoes of the existing Government. He proceeded.

"It is said that this is not an ordinary case of the transfer of power from one Party to another. It means, for the first time, the installation of a Socialist Government in the seats of the mighty. Few people who have not had the melancholy privilege of reading my post-bag for the last month will realize what this prospect means to a large and by no means negligible mass of our fellow subjects. I have had a very large experience of the vagaries of postal correspondence. I have never come across more virulent manifestations of an epidemic of political hysteria. Notwithstanding my own compromising past—I am supposed to have been the associate of rebels, and worse than rebels, in days gone by—I have been in turn, during these weeks, cajoled, wheedled, almost caressed, taunted, threatened, brow-beaten, and all but blackmailed to step in as the 'saviour of society'."

None of this, however, he said, shook his determination. He saw no reason why both in social legislation at home and in the 'reassertion of the moral authority of Great Britain in the councils of the world', there should not be co-operation not merely between the Liberal Party and the Labour Party but between large numbers of all Parties. The Liberals without forfeiting their complete and unfettered independence were prepared to make their contribution to that task.

The words about 'office without power' and the unfettered independence of the Liberal Party were to be remembered in days to come, but for the moment our minds were centred on the immediate issue, and of course Mr Asquith's speech settled it. The result of the division became a foregone conclusion. Liberals and Labour voting together carried the amendment by 328 to 256. Mr Baldwin resigned, and advised the King to send for Mr Ramsay MacDonald, who immediately set about forming his Government.

I do not think it ever occurred to me that I might be included in the Ministry, but as a matter of fact I very nearly was. Vernon Hartshorn told me some years later that MacDonald, in appointing him Postmaster-General, had suggested to him that he might like to have me as Assistant Postmaster. He had rejected this proposal, he said, not for any personal opposition to myself, but because, unwisely, as he subsequently realized,

he thought he could do all the work himself and would not need a subordinate Minister to assist him. As a consequence, I spent the next five years of my Parliamentary life as a back bencher, an experience which I should otherwise have missed.

When the House next met there had been a kind of 'general post'. The Conservatives occupied all the seats to the left of the Speaker, we were on the benches nearest to him on the other side of 'the floor', while the Liberals, who were also on his right, sat below the 'gangway', as the little passage which runs across the House is colloquially called. Of course there could not be a revised King's Speech, but Ramsay MacDonald outlined the policy that he intended to carry through and explained that, in the exceptional circumstances of a Government without a majority behind it, minor defeats would not be regarded as expressions of no confidence. He asked the House therefore to act as a Council of State. He seemed to me at that time to have all the qualities of a leader—presence, sound judgment, a command of words, and self confidence without undue self-assertion.

Most new Members find the procedure of the House very difficult to understand, and I was glad when I was told in the Labour Party weekly circular, known as *The Whip*, that a course of lectures were to be given about it by my old friend and former pupil, Lees-Smith. But I confess I was astonished when he said in the opening lecture that if we learnt all he had to say in the course of the twelve he was giving, we should probably know about *two thirds* of the procedure. Experience has shown me that he did not overstate its complexity and though I attended all his lectures and assimilated most of his information and have added to it since by personal experience, I should hesitate to say even now that I have passed his two thirds mark. Many Members, I am certain, do not acquire so much, and there are quite a number who scarcely understand it at all.

It may be of interest if I give one or two illustrations. In the first place, sittings in the Chamber are of two kinds. There are sittings of the House proper, when the Speaker or one of his deputies is in the Chair and the mace is above the table. On such occasions an M.P. is expected to address his remarks to 'Mr Speaker' or to 'Mr Deputy Speaker'. There are sittings of the whole House as a committee when the mace is below the table, the Speaker's Chair is untenanted and the Chairman sits by the side of the clerks at the table. The correct method of address is then to refer to the Chairman by name. The Speaker never sits as a chairman of committee but the regular chairmen are the Speaker's deputies, and I have often heard even experienced members of the House use the wrong form of address.

Committees of the whole House are of three kinds. There is the Committee of Ways and Means, which is concerned with the raising of money. It is before this committee that the Chancellor of the Exchequer opens his annual Budget. There is the Committee of Supply, when it is the prerogative of the Opposition to arraign any Minister it pleases, and challenge him on any part of the administration of his office. There are the committees which go through Bills line by line and discuss amendments. In every one of these committees there are elaborate rules as to what may and what may not be said, and I have myself experienced the truth of the



remark, that the only sure way of understanding any one of them is to have been 'called to order' at least once for breaking it

Then there are four kinds of Bills.—Government Bills, Private Members' Bills, Private Bills, and Hybrid Bills, each with its special method of procedure \* There are motions relating to policy, others 'for the adjournment', 'to report progress', or in the form of a 'prayer' that an order be annulled There are rules about allotment of time There is the right of the Chair to 'select' amendments There are 'closure', the 'kangaroo', and the 'guillotine' There is the quaint rule about addressing the Chair, while a division is in progress, *seated and covered*, which means with a hat on one's head This was a simple enough matter in old days when every M P had his top hat handy, but has led today to some absurd improvisations of headgear which I have witnessed

A great deal of the work of the House of Commons is done not in the Chamber itself, but in the committee rooms upstairs There sit the 'standing committees', such as the Committee on Public Accounts—the premier committee of the House—of which I was at once made a member and later became chairman, the Committee of Selection, and the Committee on Privileges There are also Select Committees to deal with special matters, to which I have frequently been appointed, and the legislative committees to deal with public and private Bills All these carry on the official work of Parliament, and their personnel is selected from the different Parties scrupulously in proportion to the respective numbers of the Party representation in the House itself

The committee rooms are also used for unofficial groups of Members, whose number is legion For instance, there was until recently a House of Commons branch of the League of Nations Union Soon after my election I was invited to be a vice chairman of this group, the chairman being a Conservative and the other vice-chairman being a Liberal, and the secretary a Conservative, Lord Hartington (now Duke of Devonshire) I remember one critical occasion in international affairs when the officers of this group went on a special deputation to Mr Baldwin, who was then Prime Minister, and he spoke to us with engaging candour about his own Foreign Secretary, Mr Austen Chamberlain The rooms are also used for Party meetings and for gatherings of the general public, provided at least one M P is present and has taken the room in his name When complaints are made, in the press and elsewhere, that only a few Members are to be found sitting in the Chamber itself and listening to the debate, all this committee room work must never be forgotten Without it a great deal of the essential value of Parliament would cease to exist

After I had been a month in the House I made my 'maiden speech' on the subject of pensions for widowed mothers At that time, as I pointed out, if a man's death was due to natural causes no provision of any kind was made for his widow or their children, and she had to undertake the impossible dual tasks of breadwinner and homekeeper My wife and I had been in close touch with Judge Neil, who had secured the passage of this reform in many of the States of the U S A, and I was well up in my subject When the speaker who followed me in the debate

\* The difference in constitutional practice in the United States is one of the factors which makes intelligent understanding of the procedure of Congress so baffling to Britishers.

congratulated me on my speech I was delighted, being happily ignorant, until some time afterwards, that it is one of the kindly traditions of the House that compliments are always paid to a maiden speech in this way. The motion in favour of the proposal was agreed to in the House without a division, but of course this was merely an expression of opinion on the principle and not an active step towards its realization.

On April 2 Walter Guinness (now Lord Moyne), who had been Financial Secretary to the Treasury in the previous Government, moved a motion condemning the proposal for a Levy on Capital. This gave me my chance to move an amendment to the opposite effect and to set out my idea of the scheme in full. I got an attentive hearing, though my speech must have been rather solid meat even for such an intelligent audience as the House of Commons. Neville Chamberlain, in winding up the debate, dealt mainly with the case which I had put. I was not greatly impressed by his speech, which seemed to me at the time rather superficial and not quite fair. But of course I was not an altogether unprejudiced listener. In the division, the Liberals voted with the Conservatives against my amendment, which was therefore defeated by 325 votes to 160.

During the remainder of the session I did not have many opportunities to speak. I found that the back benchers on the Government side were wanted more for their votes in the division lobby than for their voices in debate. The instructions given to us were like those of my childhood days—'to be seen and not heard'. I did, however, intervene once or twice in the discussions on the Budget, and I asked a few questions about matters in which I took a special interest. For the rest I was content, when I was not taking part in the multifarious activities outside the Chamber, to sit and listen to the debate. Much of it interested me, and I was very rarely bored except when there was deliberate obstruction, and all the time I was gaining an insight into the spirit and traditions of the House.

I found that I liked some Members more than others and that these likes and dislikes cut across Party lines. I discovered that my experience in this respect was shared by many of my colleagues. The House of Commons is a pretty good judge of character and it makes up its mind about a newcomer soon after he begins to take any active part in its proceedings. Sincerity is the main test. If a man is obviously speaking with conviction, the House of Commons will accept him however extreme or biased he may appear to be to the vast majority of his fellow Members. If they think he is merely playing to the gallery they have no use for him. But sincerity alone will not make them willing to listen to him, still less will it bring them specially into the Chamber to hear him. That will depend upon whether he has some real contribution to make to the debate, and on whether he can say it effectively. It took me a very long time before I began to learn what are the essentials of a good parliamentary speech, and still longer before I could even try to put my knowledge into practice. To this subject I will revert later.

Party allegiance is rather a puzzle to outsiders. Some of them imagine that there must be a constant conflict between a man's loyalty to his convictions and his obedience to the Party Whips. My wife's mother, no doubt without realizing it, expressed the idea in an extreme form when she said to her daughter before we were married "Don't let

him go into Parliament, Emmie, he has got far too pronounced opinions. I have found in practice that the dilemma has very seldom arisen in my case, and that on the rare occasions when it has done so there has generally been a satisfactory way of meeting it. It must be remembered in the first place that a Party consists of those members whose convictions are, on major issues, sufficiently in accord to make them decide to act together. Secondly, when new important issues arise the Labour Party discusses them in advance, and it has been my good fortune to find that my viewpoint and that of the majority of my colleagues have usually coincided. Thirdly, there is the 'escape' clause in the Party constitution, which entitles a member who has conscientious or other strong grounds for dissent to abstain from voting without thereby contravening Party discipline.

But over and above all this I have learnt that a man's individual vote in the House is of far less importance than the influence that he can exert on his own Party from within for the essence of effective political activity is teamwork. That is why some M.P.s whose utterances appear profound to outsiders cut little ice inside the House. If a man is speaking for himself alone he is just one out of 615, but if he is the mouth-piece of a Party or a group then the strength of his voice is multiplied by the number whom he is representing. In accordance with this view I have concentrated upon trying to bring my Party into line with me on questions on which I have had special knowledge or strong convictions, and I have been willing to accept their guidance on other matters.

As the session wore on, a good deal of dissatisfaction began to be expressed inside the ranks of the Labour Party at the meagre legislative achievements of the Government. Philip Snowden's Budget was regarded as good as far as it went, but not essentially different from what might have been expected from a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, the problem of unemployment remained unsolved, there was no attempt to nationalize industry, the lot of the worker was not substantially improved. In answer to criticisms along these lines it was pointed out that everything could not be done in the first session and further that no Bill could reach the Statute Book unless it had Liberal support. To this the critics rejoined that it would be better to go down with colours flying than to lower the flag in the hope of keeping the ship afloat. I occupied a somewhat middle position between these extremes of left and right opinion. I shared the disappointment at the apparent inaction, but I thought that the country would have been annoyed if the Prime Minister, having taken office, had almost immediately courted defeat.

In the realm of administration, which is only indirectly subject to parliamentary control, there was more to show. This was particularly true in foreign affairs. Ramsay MacDonald had chosen to be his own Foreign Secretary, and he was surprisingly successful in winning the goodwill of both France and Germany. He also brought off a three-power naval agreement between ourselves, the United States, and Japan. These were spectacular achievements, but in his relations with the Soviet Union he was not so happy, and an agreement was not reached until the Labour Party outside the Government had intervened in the matter. This intervention incensed the Conservatives and was frowned on by the Liberals, and the ratification of the agreement itself was held up

Another controversial issue was the proposal contained in the 'protocol', by which Britain was pledged to support collective security by force if necessary. This also awaited the approval of the House of Commons.

In July, my wife and I attended the Royal Garden Party and we also went to an evening At Home in Buckingham Palace, at which, if I remember right, only the Labour Members were present. The King sent for several of us in turn and had a few words of private conversation. He discussed with us our part in the suffragette campaign and my defeat of Winston Churchill in the election. 'He asked me whether I did not think, in spite of that, that Churchill was a man who ought to be in the House of Commons, to which I gave a somewhat grudging acquiescence. I little thought then that the day would come when I should regard his Premiership as of vital importance to the country in its most critical hour.

At intervals during the session, the Royal Assent was given to a number of Bills which had passed through both Houses of Parliament and I was frequently a witness of the ceremony. According to the tradition of centuries, the first sign that something is going to happen is the banging on the outer door of the House of Commons. This is followed by three loud knocks, and the Serjeant at Arms announces 'Black Rod'. This officer then marches up towards the table, and bowing first to the Government and then to the Opposition invites the presence of 'your honourable House' in the House of Peers to hear the Royal Assent given. The Speaker and several Members then proceed two and two to 'the other place', where a regular pantomime is carried through. Seated on chairs in front of the throne are three of the peers clad in red cloaks with ermine capes and three cornered hats. The central of the three peers (usually the Lord Chancellor) then instructs one of the clerks to read the Commission appointing them and others to act on behalf of His Majesty in passing the Bill into law. As their individual names are called the peers doff their headgear. After that another clerk reads the titles of the Bills, and a third clerk pronounces in Norman French the king's assent and bows low. The words *le roi le veult* are used for ordinary Bills, but in the case of money Bills additional words convey the thanks of His Majesty to his good subjects because in olden days the revenue was really the king's revenue for which he had asked. The ceremony over, the Commons return to their own House and the Speaker makes a report of what has taken place.

During the recess I went with several other M.P.s to Switzerland for the conference of the Interparliamentary Union. This interesting body had been formed several years prior to the 1914 war. Membership was open to any member of any free Parliament throughout the world. Recently its annual conferences had been revived, but, so far, Germans had not been readmitted. Our sessions in 1924 were held in the Parliament House in Berne, a semicircular chamber through whose spacious windows at the back of the Speaker's chair could be seen the distant mountains. I do not remember the subject of our discussion, but it was exceedingly interesting to me to be brought in contact with men from other countries who were occupying positions similar to my own. After its sittings in Berne, the conference migrated to Geneva, where we were shown over the offices of the League of Nations and of its subsidiary the International

*Labour Organization* By way of a holiday, our Swiss hosts took us an excursion up to within 2000 feet of the top of the Jungfrau by the newly constructed Jungfrau railway. Unfortunately the weather was bad and we had very little view.

When the session of the House of Commons reopened in the autumn we expected animated discussions on foreign affairs and on controversial aspects of home policy. Instead, an unexpected breeze blew up about a communist called Campbell who had been arrested but not prosecuted. It was alleged that improper political influence had been imported into the case by the Prime Minister, and a Select Committee to go into the whole matter was demanded by the Conservatives. This was refused by Mr Ramsay MacDonald, and Sir Patrick Hastings, the Attorney-General, proceeded to make a full statement of what had taken place. His speech appeared to me to make a great impression on the House, and it almost looked as though the matter would be allowed to rest, but Sir John Simon, who followed, decided otherwise. In a very clever speech he reopened the controversy and thereby settled the immediate fate of the Labour Government. This no doubt was in accordance with his intention, but I do not suppose he foresaw that an ulterior effect of this use of the 'unfettered independence' of the Liberal Party would be to reduce its numbers in the House in successive elections to exiguous proportions. The Labour rank and file went blithely through the division lobby to their own defeat, for they had grown tired of the humiliating experience of 'office without power'.

The outstanding feature of the general election of 1924 in the country as a whole was the Zinoviev letter. This purported to be a document written by a prominent member of the Communist Party in Russia, and, if authentic, certainly did not make very pleasant reading for friends of the Soviet Government in this country. A copy of it was printed in one of the Conservative newspapers on the eve of the poll, and another copy had apparently been sent to the Foreign Office some days previously. But no proof was ever submitted that there was a genuine original, and the fact that it dotted the 'i's and crossed the 't's of all the arguments which the Conservatives had been using against the ratification of the Russian treaty has always made me regard it with grave suspicion. Its effect as an election stunt was greatly heightened by the fact that MacDonald himself apparently took it seriously, and had drafted a dispatch to the Soviet Government about it. What he intended to do with the draft is not quite clear, but it was published by the Foreign Office itself shortly after the appearance in the press of the alleged Zinoviev letter. This double publication was a bombshell for Labour candidates everywhere. Many were defeated, and only 151 secured re-election to the House of Commons. At the same time the Liberal Party was reduced from 158 to 44, while the Conservatives secured no fewer than 415 seats. Thus they held a majority of 200 over all other Parties combined.

My own personal contest in Leicester was a very close one. The opponents of Labour combined forces by running only a Conservative candidate in the East division of the city, which had been held by my Labour colleague, Alderman Banton, and only a Liberal in my seat, the West division. This was a formidable proposition for me, because at the previous election, though I had beaten Winston Churchill by over 1000

Accordingly I began to occupy a regular place on the second bench, and rose to speak on a great variety of occasions. The difficulty now was to 'catch the Speaker's eye', and many a time I sat hour after hour bobbing up at intervals and often not being called upon in the end. I remember one evening in particular I was told by the Labour Whip, when Neville Chamberlain was speaking at about seven o'clock, that if I rose when he sat down I should probably be able to 'get in'. I tried to do so, but another of my colleagues was called in my stead. At the end of his speech I tried again, without success. Again and again I rose, but it was not till 1.30 a.m. that my chance came. By that time my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, and I could hardly utter a syllable!

I consulted my friends, who told me that this was a common experience of junior Members, but that there was for it at least a partial remedy. The first thing was to realize that debates in the House of Commons were of a great number of different kinds. There were leading debates, such as on the second reading of important Bills when the time was limited and only a few Members could possibly speak. As to these, the best thing to do was to have a private word with the Speaker in advance. He would probably tell me whether there was any likelihood of his calling me, and if so at what time it would be well for me to rise. Then there were less important debates, such as the Committee stages of Bills, when short speeches were usually made and my chance of getting in would be much greater. Then there were the Fridays when Private Members' Bills were discussed, and if I was interested in any of these I should find little difficulty in taking part. Finally there were subjects which appealed only to comparatively few Members, and if I was prepared to specialize on one of them I could almost certainly count upon being able to speak whenever it came up in the House.

I took all this advice to heart, and added to it from my experience that for each kind of debate a different technique of speaking was required. There were 'cocked hat' speeches to be made on the big days, objective remarks when the House was in Committee, non-Party discussions on Fridays, and detailed analysis when special subjects were being discussed. On these last occasions as has been aptly said, the House likes to be 'informed' but not to be 'instructed'. Naturally I decided to specialize on finance. There were many other subjects, notably foreign affairs, in which I was equally interested and which seemed to me equally important, but finance came most easily to me owing to my mathematical bent, and there were in that field fewer competitors anxious to catch the Speaker's eye.

The choice of this subject brought me up against my old adversary, Winston Churchill. After another unsuccessful attempt to enter the House in the spring of 1924 he had secured a safe seat for Epping at the general election. He had been made the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Those who remembered his demands on the Treasury in previous administrations, when he had been at the head of one or other of the spending departments, said it was a case of poacher turned gamekeeper. From that time onward I crossed swords with him on many occasions. At first, as an obscure back bencher I was scarcely within his orbit, but later, as I came to take a more prominent part, he had constantly to deal with

my criticisms, and of course in the following Parliament, when I was Financial Secretary to the Treasury, he and I were in frequent conflict.

Winston Churchill's Budgets were a masterpiece of camouflage. He loved to cover up his actual proposals with a canvas of unreality, which he painted in variegated hues and embellished with oratorical brilliance. After he had sat down, and the usual compliments had been paid, I used to spend an amusing evening by myself, ripping off this protective covering bit by bit until I came at last to the naked substance which he had so successfully hidden. But next day, after the morning papers had set out in full his proposals, and the Front Bench had concentrated on all the main features, I found that when I came to speak there were only a few minutiae left for me to deal with.

The first time that I took an independent line of my own was on the restoration of the gold standard\* in May 1925. I was against it, but Philip Snowden was for it, and had committed himself to it in advance in print. This made my position rather difficult, but I carried the day in a small expert committee set up by the Labour Party to consider the question, and I got an amendment to the Bill put down, to the effect that the step was precipitate and likely to aggravate unemployment and trade depression. Snowden did his best in moving it to support the Party standpoint and then left the subsequent running to be made by myself and other back benchers. I made a speech which was far too academic and balanced for the House, but I expressed the view that the restoration of the gold standard would not be permanent, that its immediate effect would be to injure the export trade and that it ought at least to be mitigated by international action to steady the price level. Though we carried on the fight through the later stages of the Bill, it was, of course, passed against our opposition, but a friend of mine who voted with the Government told me that he heard Churchill say in the division lobby "I am not so sure that that damned fellow Pethick-Lawrence isn't right after all."

The immediate sequel to the return to gold was a fall† in the British price of coal. In consequence the colliery owners, in order to reduce their expenses, imposed heavy cuts in miners' wages, which the men naturally resisted. The Government, in the hope of resolving the difficulty, appointed a Commission of enquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Herbert Samuel (now Lord Samuel). But the colliery owners refused to accept its proposals, and when Labour supported the miners, the Government failed to prevent a head on collision which took the unprecedented form of a general strike.

This was certainly the most remarkable social phenomenon I have witnessed during my life and I am convinced that in no other country than our own could it have been conducted in the way that it was. Though transport and other essential services were largely at a standstill, though

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\* Not, of course, of the gold currency. Gold coins have never been in use in Britain since 1914.

† This was due to the fact that coal being an article of international commerce, had a recognized value in terms of world currencies. When therefore the rate of exchange of the British pound note was arbitrarily increased, the number of dollars or krone or lire which a ton of coal fetched in the world market was the equivalent of a smaller sum than before in £ s. d.

a class war was in fact raging, tempers remained unfrayed, Parliament continued sitting without disorder, there was no violence or loss of life, and any injury to persons or property was insignificant. In the House of Commons we debated the situation continuously, and Sir John Simon ranged himself unequivocally against Labour by the pronouncement that the general strike was inherently illegal. Winston Churchill, editing the Government news sheet which took the place of the daily press, suppressed a speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was charged with bias in presentation of the news. He retorted with an epigram: "You cannot be impartial between the fire engine and the fire."

At the week-end the Labour Party sent its M.P.s out all over the country in special brakes, which bore placards with the inscription, 'By permission of the Trade Union Congress'. I was put off at Nottingham and found myself in the novel rôle of a trade union leader explaining a strike to his men. Naturally I had taken advice from my T.U. colleagues before I set off and I got through my unsought task without serious difficulty. But a general strike is a weapon with a point at both ends and the sharper one is that towards the workers themselves, who of necessity have less reserves of staying-power. This became more apparent as days went by, and the leaders decided to bring the strike to an end on some sort of terms before it collapsed from within, and forced them into unconditional surrender. Unfortunately they did not carry the miners with them, and the strike in the coalfields went on until finally they, too, were beaten into submission.

In those days Winston Churchill constantly aroused the ire of the Labour Party. A favourite device, which in his character of a *gamin* he loved to employ, was to provoke us to interruptions which drew from him a carefully prepared 'impromptu retort' which turned the laugh against us. Time and again we tried to defeat these tactics by silence, but some one of us was sure to be stung into the ejaculation on which Churchill had counted as a foil to his wit. To meet this we planned and carried out on one occasion a kind of stay in strike. While he was speaking we sat on the benches, but ostentatiously paid no attention to what he was saying. Some of us bent our heads and wrote notes, others turned and chatted with our neighbours. He was visibly discomfited and his speech was a failure, for a great orator can stand any treatment except to be ignored.

The manoeuvre was never repeated, mainly I think because he took the lesson to heart and remodelled his form of address. In the House of Commons hard hitting is all taken in good part, banter and ridicule are not resented but constant irritation of one's opponents does not command general approval. Every now and again Churchill made a really great speech. Rising above mere Party jousting, he dealt with the subject-matter in a broad way, which showed a depth of understanding and genuine statecraft. These speeches attracted me far more than his others, and I think most of the House shared my view, for it was held spellbound while he was speaking and for many days afterwards in the lobbies, and in the dining rooms and wherever members forgathered, his speech would be the subject of discussion.

The Budget of 1925 had an addendum in the shape of a scheme for contributory pensions which Winston Churchill expounded. The bene-



ficiaries were manual workers of both sexes from 65\* years of age, aged wives of pensioners, widows, and orphan children Philip Snowden, from hints that he let drop, evidently regarded this scheme as his own offspring, which had been gestated in the Treasury and the Ministry of Health from the days of the Labour Government But the Labour Party did not take kindly to the contributory principle, and though I welcomed the relief to the widowed mother, about whom I had made my maiden speech in the House the year before, I shared their dislike Looking back today, after some seventeen years in which great benefits have been conferred on the workers by this scheme and its subsequent modifications, I am constrained to think that we were wrong in the main in our opposition, though the scheme had undoubtedly serious defects, some of which have persisted Neville Chamberlain, as Minister of Health, piloted the Bill through the House, and in doing so exhibited mastery of his subject and a willingness to make minor concessions, one or two of which were due to my initiative

The annual conference of the Interparliamentary Union was held this year (1925) in America I decided to go, and was delighted when I found that Emmeline would be able to come with me Before starting I 'paired' for the whole of the autumn with Sir Gerald Strickland (later Lord Strickland), who sat in the British House of Commons as a Conservative, but was also Prime Minister of Malta, where he held office with the support of the local Labour Party The journey out was interesting, as the ship was crowded with parliamentarians from all over Europe, with many of whom we were able to make contact Incidentally, I was taught to dance the tango, and I remember that later, at Detroit, while we were all waiting for a train, the wife of Sir Robert Bird, M P, and I gave an exhibition along the full length of the station platform'

All was hustle when we got to New York as our ship had been delayed by bad weather, and we had to make up for lost time Emmeline was drafted off to stay with friends, but I, as a member of the Council of the I P U, was billeted at the Pennsylvania Hotel The English speaking Union gave a banquet that evening to the British delegates and I had to respond for the Labour group I racked my brains for the 'bright' remark which an after dinner speech demands, I sought advice from my wife in vain Just as I was getting up, I bethought me that Prohibition was the burning topic in U S A at the moment, and that we had only that morning stepped ashore, so I commenced my speech by pointing out that this was 'our first meal on *dry* land' It went home, and after that the rest was easy When I reached my hotel that night and got up to my room on the thirteenth floor I found the housekeeper sitting outside awaiting me 'I could not allow you to go in,' she said, 'without letting you know that I was one of your suffragettes,' and she proceeded to tell me of her militant activity in England, of her decision to come to America and of her life since her arrival

The conference proper was held at Washington in the House of Representatives, which I had already seen as a visitor on a previous occasion Taking part in a discussion there was totally unlike a corresponding experience in the British House of Commons, for instead of speaking from

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\* Non contributory pensions for persons over 70 had been enacted in 1903

one's place one had to march solemnly to the rostrum and face the great assembly. The subject I chose to speak on was that of the nationality of married women, on which American law was already more progressive than that in the British Empire and in Europe. I urged that in mixed marriages women ought to have the right to retain their own nationality, and moved a resolution to refer the matter to the Juridical Committee. This was adopted without dissent. In the *Herald Tribune* of New York next day half a column was devoted to my speech under the title 'M P pleads for Cupid'.

After sitting for a week in Washington the conference adjourned to hold its final session in Ottawa. We travelled thither by way of New York, Niagara Falls and Hamilton. At Hamilton we were met by a fleet of private motor cars, whose owner-drivers took us by twos and threes for a delightful tour through and around the city. As we saw its well laid out streets and handsome stone buildings, it was difficult to realize that, less than a hundred years before, its site was still open country. At the banquet in the evening, when the toast was proposed by our Canadian hosts of the health of the 41 nations who were present, I had to respond 'on behalf of the world'.

The Parliament buildings at Ottawa present a striking spectacle, standing as they do in spacious grounds of their own. I found that their House of Commons had been designed on the model of our British House but was larger, in spite of the fact that it had to accommodate far fewer Members: everyone had a seat of his own with a lock up desk in front of him. While we were there we were all accorded the Members' privilege of 'franking' letters, a custom which used to exist in this country but was discontinued owing to abuse. The conference debate was concerned with the important question of racial minorities in the new nations of Europe.

Next day most of the conference members started for home, but Emmeline and I decided to cross the American continent to visit her brother Harold and his wife who were then settled near Los Angeles. On our return journey we stopped in New Mexico to visit the Pueblo Indians of Jemez and witness a ceremonial dance. It was an impressive sight. The men raised their feet high and struck the ground with each foot to call the attention of the underworld. The women, because they are said to draw their strength from the earth, never lifted up their feet, but in their hands waved branches of evergreen juniper as a symbol of life everlasting. Both sexes had raven locks and strong classic features. Several clans took part, and the men of one of them had their bodies painted turquoise blue to represent the sky. We were told that the dance was partly a harvest thanksgiving and partly an invocation for rain. If so, it soon produced the required effect, for two days later when I was visiting the famous cave dwellings of Tyuonyi I was caught in a prolonged snowstorm, the first moisture for many months.

There were two further conferences of the I P U during that period of my Parliamentary life. In 1927 we met in the Senate in Paris. I myself spoke on the question of tariffs and, as the one British member of the Economic sub-committee, had to explain not only my own point of view but that of the British delegation as a whole. The feature of the conference, however, was the straight talking that went on between the

Germans and the French. Herr Loebe, the socialist chairman of the Reichstag, appealed for more friendly treatment of Germany and the withdrawal of the army of occupation. M. Juvenel, in reply, said that Europe could not be divided into a peaceful West and a threatened East, and that unless Germany was prepared to extend the Locarno agreement to cover both its frontiers the only security for peace was the allied occupation of the Rhineland. I thought it all to the good that the disagreement should be expressed openly on the floor of the conference.

In 1928 we went to Berlin. The German capital was humming with activity during the week, and on Sunday there was a great exodus of youth to the lakes and other centres of sport life. The I P U conference met in the Reichstag and was attended, for the first time, I think, by representatives of fascist Italy, but they took little part in the proceedings. There were some sharp passages between the Roumanian and Hungarian representatives, but no echo of the Franco-German interchanges of the year before. I made a speech on the international aspect of Labour conditions, urging the I P U to appoint a sub-committee to hammer out constructive proposals as a counterpart to the more official proceedings of the Labour Office of the League of Nations. Four years previously my wife had also spoken in the Reichstag at a peace demonstration. Neither of us could have imagined that a few years later this handsome Chamber would be set on fire by German hands in mysterious circumstances.

During all this period, Sir Austen Chamberlain was at the Foreign Office. Sitting on the Treasury bench in the House of Commons with a monocle in his eye and a glossy top hat on his head, he looked austere and formidable, and it was a long time before I found out that this was a façade designed to hide a kindly and simple-minded personality. Foreign Office debates were a very solemn affair in those days, for though he rarely told us anything we did not know before, he wrapped it all up with a great deal of verbiage, and if anyone ventured to interrupt or to put a question there were immediate cries of 'Sh-sh' on all sides. "It seems like being in church," whispered Ellen Wilkinson to me from behind.

Sir Austen spoke French fluently and as he once told us 'loved France as a man loves a woman'. In consequence, he was inclined to take the French attitude in preference to the British with regard to the treatment of Germany. The matter came to a head in the spring of 1926. Germany had been admitted to the League of Nations and now claimed a seat on the Council. The French Government favoured refusal and Sir Austen fell into line with them, but in Britain the view was widely held that the wisest course was at this stage to bring Germany right into the centre of world comity. I do not think there was a single dissentient voice in the British Press or in the House of Commons branch of the League of Nations Union, and as a vice-President of that body I was deputed to go with my fellow officers to represent this to Mr. Baldwin, the Prime Minister. In the debate which followed in the House of Commons, I pointed out that the traditional freedom and support given to a Foreign Secretary rested on the assumption that he would act in accordance with British public opinion, and that for him to flout it was a

breach of constitutional usage My protest was taken up and supported in the Press Sir Austen, however, insisted on taking his own line and in the League cast the British vote against the German claim

During the first week of June 1926 there was held in Paris an international congress of women on behalf of woman suffrage, and I accepted the President's invitation to come to speak at a demonstration in the Sorbonne I travelled from England by air so as to save parliamentary time and thoroughly enjoyed the novel experience The hall in Paris was packed, and the audience appeared to take in nearly all my points though I spoke mainly in English Next day the French women took me with them on a deputation to M Briand, who was then Prime Minister Unlike his British counterpart in the suffragette days, he received them most cordially, and though he declined their request that he should come out on a public platform in support of their cause he said that they could have anyone of his Cabinet in his stead, 'anyone that they chose'

Shortly after that Emmeline and I began to make preparations for our silver wedding, which was due on October 2 We had four functions in all—a dinner and dance for our private friends, a supper in Mansfield House, Canning Town, which had been the scene of our original wedding, a reception to my constituents in the de Montfort Hall, Leicester, and a public dinner in London, which was given to us by the Women's Freedom League At this last, Dame Millicent Fawcett proposed the toast of our health, Captain Wedgwood Benn, M P, seconded it, Margaret Nevinston, Pett Ridge, and Evelyn Sharp supported it Bernard Shaw, who was unable to come wrote from Italy that he could only condole with his friends on their having failed to conceal their silver wedding as successfully as he concealed his'

We decided to have a silver honeymoon in India and to combine both pleasure and politics in our visit We already counted among our friends many of the leading personalities of the country and further opportunities of intercourse were opened to us by Sir Howard d Egvile, the able and progressive secretary of the Empire Parliamentary Association, of which I was a member As a result we had a most enjoyable and informative time I introduced Emmeline to the Taj at Agra and she shared my ecstasy at its unrivalled beauty We went together to Darjeeling and watched in the early dawn the sun light up the massive heights of the Himalayas We drove from Peshawar to Landikotal, meeting on the way four continuous miles of loaded camels and looked over into Afghanistan and its distant mountains beyond Kabul We saw old and new Delhi, the exquisite lake at Udaipur lapping the walls of its white palaces, and the priceless carpets and gems of Jaipur

I found much that reminded me of my former visit 30 years before, but much also that had changed during the interval The coming of the motor car had made a radical difference in the effective proximity of the country to the town, and the growth of industrialism had created an urban proletariat and the appalling slums in which it was housed Though the poverty of the masses seemed nearly as hopeless as ever, the British Raj had opened up vast new areas by irrigation works, and had succeeded in stamping out the periodic famines which had been brought so forcibly to my attention in 1897 But the change in the political outlook of the peoples of India was perhaps the most remarkable In place of humbly

acquiescing in a subordinate position, even in purely local affairs, Congress was claiming control of provincial and national government. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms had created the system known as the 'diarchy', and sections of the educated classes, particularly in Bengal, were in revolt against the limited amount of power that this had conferred upon them. It was naturally to these political issues that most of my conversations were directed.

In Madras we stayed with my old college friend Campbell, who was then occupying a prominent place in the government of the province. I learnt from him and from leading Indians to whom he introduced me that the diarchic system there had worked fairly well so far, and that there would be general acceptance of a further advance to genuine self-government. The Congress Party asked that a 'round-table conference' should be set up with British and Indian representatives sitting together to work out a constitution for the whole country. We went into the Indian State of Mysore and stayed as guests of the ruling Prince. In the course of an interesting drive Sir Mirzah Ishmail, his far sighted Prime Minister, expounded to me the attitude of the Indian States and of Mysore in particular.

In Bengal we found much more troubled waters. Large numbers of politically minded young Indians were being detained in prison on suspicion of subversive activities. I discussed this with Lord Lytton, the Governor, who was already well known to me from the days when his sister, Lady Constance, had been a leading suffragette. He explained to me the reasons why very regretfully he had adopted this course. I found that the matter roused deep feelings among many Indians outside the immediate political arena. Sir Jagadis Bose, the scientist, after showing us most interesting experiments on plant life in his laboratory told us how passionately he felt with regard to it and on the whole question of Indian self government.

We went to stay with Rabindranath Tagore the poet, at Santiniketan. Seated at dinner, my wife spoke of her delight in the Taj at Agra. Whereupon our host told us of a poem he had written about it in Bengalee, and pressed by my wife he kindly consented to translate a few sentences from it for our special benefit. 'I address my words,' he said, 'to Shah Jehan' (the emperor who had it built in memory of his favourite wife). 'I say to him 'You knew that human grief however deep and passionate was yet mortal, therefore you conceived the idea of imprinting in marble a teardrop on the cheek of eternity.''' We talked of religion and were shown his famous library of Tibetan books. But he, too, spoke to us long and earnestly about the political aspirations of India and about the Bengalee *detenies*, many of whom, he said, had been his pupils and were still his personal friends.

We travelled specially to Gauhati in Assam for the Indian National Congress and were allowed to be present even at the private session of the important 'Subjects Committee' where the main business was discussed in advance and the time-table mapped out. The Congress itself was an immense and impressive affair. In addition to Hindus there were the brothers Ali and several other Muslims. Though Jinnah did not come I do not think he was as much opposed then as he became later. (I saw him once during my visit and he talked to me mainly about the Indian

Army) Every part of the country was represented, and most of the speeches were made in English, the one common medium—a proof, if one were needed, of the unification which British rule had effected. Gandhi largely dominated the conference. Years before, shortly after he left South Africa, he had been our guest to lunch in our London flat, and now he found time for a short talk with us during the hour of his frugal dinner of raisins and milk. We discussed all sorts of questions with him from Swaraj to birth control and appreciated the veneration in which he was held all over the country.

On my return to Calcutta I went to see the Viceroy, Lord Irwin (now Lord Halifax). We had a long and intimate talk. I placed before him what I had gathered of public feeling about the questions of self government and of the continued detention of unconvicted prisoners. He listened sympathetically and I gathered the impression, which his public acts subsequently confirmed, that on both these matters he was already prepared to go a long way in the direction I was advocating. As I was leaving he impressed upon me that I should 'give his love to the boys in the House of Commons'.

I made many contacts with Trade Unions in India and with their leaders, very few of whom are themselves of working-class origin. The most remarkable case was that of a woman, Miss Sarabhai, who had started a Union in a town where her brother was the leading manufacturer. As its secretary, she had most strenuously fought her brother for better conditions for his workpeople. He had given in, in the end, and was now quite proud of the improvement in his factory. We attended a sort of gymkhana of the workpeople which she had organized and at which he presented the prizes.

On my return to England I wrote down and circulated among my friends and a selected list of M.P.s, not all of my own Party, a short statement of my impressions and suggestions. I rejected equally the proposals that full self government should be (1) conferred immediately or (2) doled out in instalments at the pleasure of the British House of Commons. I recommended an immediate declaration of principle, to be supplemented by a round-table conference of British and Indians to thresh out ways and means of fulfilment. I asked for the release of untried prisoners, for labour reforms, and for a much more serious attempt to deal with great social evils.

I took an increasingly active part in the work of the remaining years of the Parliament. In February 1928 the Labour Party sent me to South Wales with two colleagues to investigate the distress in the coalfields there, and the report I wrote on my return formed the subject of a debate in the House. In April of the same year the Bill to which I have already made reference, giving the franchise to women on equal terms with men, was carried through all its stages.

In May, the Government introduced a Bill to restore the control of the issue of paper currency to the Bank of England and to limit its normal amount to £260 millions in excess of the gold cover. I regarded this as a most dangerous and reactionary measure and fought it relentlessly in all its stages. I objected to Parliament handing back its essential sovereign prerogative of the control of money to the Governor of the Bank with his known predilection in favour of deflation. I objected in principle to

fixing the amount of the fiduciary issue, and to the figure of £260 millions at which it was proposed to peg it. I pointed out that the effect of this would be to limit industrial expansion within the strait jacket of a maximum purchasing power, which might even be reduced if foreign Governments withdrew any of their gold balance at the Bank of England.

It so happened that Sir Lamung Worthington-Evans, who had charge of the Bill in the House of Commons, had been a few years previously the British representative at an international conference on money, held in Genoa, and I was able to contrast the proposals of the Bill with the resolutions he had moved and the speeches he had made on that occasion. As to the leading industrialists in the House of Commons, who were commonly known among Members as 'the forty thieves', I twitted them with their lack of foresight in supporting the measure and warned them that if they continued to do so they would earn the sobriquet of 'the forty fools'. On the third reading of the Bill I drew from Sir Lamung some explanation of the circumstances in which the limit of £260 millions might be increased, but, as I pointed out, this still did not provide any margin for the normal growth of trade. Subsequent events confirmed my worst forebodings, and it was several years before, by the creation of the Exchange Equalization Account, the Executive recovered the power over money which it abrogated in this Bill in 1928.

As a keen lawn-tennis player I took part every year in the House of Commons tennis tournament and in the occasional matches which we played against various outside teams. One of the most amusing of these contests was against six women Wimbledon champions in which we were defeated by five matches to four. On another occasion Mrs Winston Churchill sent me word that she would like to avenge her husband's defeat at my hands in West Leicester, and that she and Sir Samuel Hoare were prepared to play against myself and any woman player among my acquaintance. I secured Lady Floud and the match took place on Sir Richard Crosfield's court at Highgate. I am sorry to say that my partner and I just failed to hold our own. Apart from these House of Commons contests, I managed to get in a regular weekly game throughout the year with some friends on one of the courts in Lincoln's Inn Fields. As we played during the luncheon hour we generally had a considerable 'gallery' to watch our efforts.

During those years I thought that Ramsay MacDonald led the Opposition on the whole wisely and well, but there were occasions when I should have liked to criticize his policy and have a frank discussion of it in the Party meeting. I think a large number of others shared my views, but we were prevented from giving expression to them by the violent attacks that were continually made upon him there by a small left-wing element, who had never forgiven him for his maladroit handling of the Zinoviev letter at the time of the general election. When it came to a show of hands at the end of an hour of unfair baiting of our leader, there seemed nothing for us to do but to vote down the extremists' motion of censure. Sometimes in the lobby he would ask for my advice on personal matters and express to me his difficulties with other members of the Party. Once, on my initiative, we had a frank and intimate talk on the philosophy of life and I gave him my favourite book, *Light on the Path*, and asked him to read it.

In the declining days of the Parliament the Labour Party appointed a small committee of Members to examine questions of public finance and to draft our policy regarding them for the coming election. Philip Snowden, as former Chancellor of the Exchequer, presided. I remember one evening when he had been persistently refusing to understand a point I was trying to make, that I lost my temper with him and ejaculated at last "Well, if you can't understand that, you can't understand anything." As I walked home that night I bitterly reproached myself for my impatience. "You have been a fool," I said to myself, "if you want to be included in the next Labour Government you have gone the worst way to get there."

But the sequel was otherwise. Next day, when I was sitting in the Chamber just behind Snowden, he turned round to me and said that he quite understood the point in question, but that sometimes it was a good plan not to appear to do so. A few days later he stopped me in the lobby and told me that if a Labour Government came into being after the election and he went back to his old place at the Treasury, there was no one that he would rather have to help him as Financial Secretary than myself. This incident goes, I think, a long way to explain Snowden's attitude to his colleagues in the Labour Party in the crisis a few years later. As a Yorkshireman he liked a spade to be called a spade. In political life it was right to hit hard. It was as stupid to tone down a speech from personal considerations as it was in a tennis match to serve a soft ball because the player on the other side of the net was a lady. When the match was over it would be time enough to resume personal relationships. That, at any rate, was Snowden's idea of how the game of politics should be played.

## CHAPTER XV

### IN OFFICE

At the Treasury—Holidays with pay—Difficult decisions—Municipal banks—Opposition from behind—A non party dinner—Finance Bill debates—Criticism of Churchill—How Parliament works—Unemployment—The May Committee—Lloyd George attacks Simon—Ask Papa—Montagu Norman—Treasury and Bank—Taxation of land—Stafford Cripps—The summer recess

PARLIAMENT WAS DISSOLVED in May 1929, and at the ensuing general election the Government suffered defeat. Labour became the largest Party with 287 seats, the Conservatives securing 260 and the Liberals 59. nine Independents made up the total of 615. I had no difficulty in retaining West Leicester, where my energetic supporters not only put me at the head of the poll but procured for me a majority over my two opponents combined of no fewer than 4327 votes. "You have now got a safe seat for life," whispered a friend to me when the figures were announced. Subsequent events were to give the lie to his words, and to confirm the adage about the unwisdom of prophecy. But at the time his remark seemed to have ample justification.

Mr Baldwin immediately resigned and the King sent for Mr Ramsay



MacDonald to form a Government. Impatient as I was to know my own fate, it seemed to me ages before the places in the Cabinet were all filled and the time came to choose the 'second eleven' of junior Ministers. At last, on a Sunday afternoon when I was in the country, Snowden rang me up and told me that MacDonald had agreed to my becoming Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and that I could take up my duties the next day. I remember that his call caught me in the middle of doing household 'chores', and that in my excitement over his news I repeated the famous mistake of King Alfred. Next morning, before it was time to go to the Treasury, the Prime Minister himself sent for me, and tendered me the position which I told him I was honoured to accept.

My room in the Treasury was a spacious one, overlooking the parade ground in St. James's Park. It was flanked by the rooms of Sir Warren Fisher and Sir Russell Scott, the two highest Treasury officials, and beyond the former was the famous Board Room where the Cabinets used to be held in the days when kings presided in person. The great chair which King William III used to occupy was still in being. Beyond the Board Room was the passage leading to No. 10 Downing Street, the residence of the Prime Minister, and to No. 11, where Philip Snowden was ensconced. He sent for me at once, and set me two tasks, neither of them very easy. The first was to investigate leakages in the collection of direct taxes and devise means of stopping them up, the second was to construct an effective and equitable scheme for the taxation of land values. A few days later my wife and I gave a dinner party for all the newly appointed junior Ministers, and the Prime Minister came and presided.

The office of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury is an ancient one, far older than several presided over today by Cabinet Ministers, such as the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Health. Though subject in everything to the over-riding decision of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he is technically responsible for all the civil estimates, which are in fact presented to the House of Commons in his name. He is charged with the control of the conditions of employment of the whole of the Civil Service. He has under him, in addition to the Treasury, the Board of Inland Revenue, the Board of Customs and Excise, the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Mint, and several other national institutions. He is, I believe, the only junior Minister to be given copies of all the confidential documents which come before the Cabinet, so that he is in close touch with all that is going on, though, as I found rather tantalizing, he is not informed of the results of their deliberations.

I remember the first decision I had to take as a Minister. It concerned a matter of some £37,000 which was asked for by one of the Ministries to purchase the freehold of a building which, it was expected, would be required in the course of the next year or two in a certain provincial city. The Treasury view was that it was premature and ought not to be sanctioned, to which the officials of the Ministry had replied that the building was in the market, and that if the opportunity was not seized then, it might not be possible to get a suitable place later on. I rather 'jibbed' at having to decide on what seemed to me inadequate data, and was inclined to procrastinate or to consult the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but my officials kept me sternly to the task of making up my

mind, and in the end I took responsibility for their recommendation to refuse sanction for the expenditure

A few days later, a really important point arose. While I had been in Opposition I had advocated that all Government employees should be given at least one week's holiday with pay. I had a discussion with Sir Russell Scott on this matter, and was delighted to find that, in his view, the time had come when this step forward could legitimately be taken. It would be in accordance with the Treasury tradition that the pay and conditions of work for the Government should be in line with those prevailing in good private employ. It would further provide an opportunity of equalizing simultaneously the number of bank holidays, which were already accorded in different Government establishments. Snowden was away at the time at the Hague, fighting for the full British quota of German reparations, but there was no reason to doubt his agreement with the reform. Accordingly I took the decision myself, and after some discussion with my colleagues at the War Office, Admiralty, and Air Ministry, it was announced and came into force. It affected certain post-office employees, men working in the arsenals and dockyards, tradesmen in the Air Force and a number of others—altogether, I think, about a hundred thousand persons. Nothing that I was able to do while I was Financial Secretary gave me as much satisfaction as this action, which was in line with all that my wife and I had striven for in much narrower fields.

During my term of office, many other questions of greater and lesser importance came before me. On some of them I had already formed fairly clear ideas as to how they ought to be tackled in principle. But I found that this was not usually the issue I was called upon to decide. I had to make up my mind as to what should be done *that very day* about a *particular* matter, taking into account all the existing circumstances. Frequently there was a conflict between the ideal long-term policy and the immediate *practical needs of the case in question*. Neither could properly be ignored, and I realized that it was inside my own person—as indeed that of any Minister called on to take decisions—that the tug of war between the two sets of considerations must ultimately take place.

An actual case in point will help to make my meaning clear. I had for a long time past observed that the development of British industry was frequently crippled by the action of the Bank of England, which deliberately made money dear and scarce in order to defend the gold standard, and keep the £ at a steady rate of exchange with foreign currencies. At other times the Central Banks of foreign countries were under similar constraint. I had come to the conclusion therefore that international action was required to keep the various countries in step with one another. Such an opportunity seemed to present itself when the Bank of International Settlements was being created, and Sir Walter Layton, the British delegate, came to see me about it. The questions were how wide should be the scope of the Bank, and who should control it. I then became acutely aware of the immediate risk of giving this Bank too much power. It was bad enough that, under the existing system, the British Government had no direct control over decisions of the Bank of England, which had far-reaching effects on British industry. But it would be still worse if a supra-national financial authority were set up on

which the Bank of England itself had only minority representation, and which the British Government could only influence at second remove. I urged therefore that the functions of the Bank should be strictly limited,\* and this policy was in fact adopted.

While I had been in Opposition I had been a keen advocate of municipal banks. Birmingham had secured the right, no doubt with the help of the Chamberlain influence, to have such a bank, and had made of it a striking success. But, curiously, no other city in the United Kingdom had been allowed by the Treasury the same privilege. When therefore, during the Labour Government, several municipalities renewed their applications for permission, I supported them and carried my point. The necessary enabling legislation was accordingly introduced. To this there was considerable opposition from the Tory benches, but during the debate Neville Chamberlain beckoned to me to have a word with him behind the Speaker's chair. He then asked me whether we intended to impose any safeguards, and I told him that we proposed to embody some of the main principles which had found favour with the directors of the Birmingham bank. He said that after that assurance he would call off any further Tory opposition. I returned to my seat and in winding up the debate announced the intentions of the Government. I was greeted with cries of "Traitor" from one or two Labour members sitting behind me. I was deeply chagrined at this reception, for though as a political leader I had grown the necessary hard skin in front to resist thrusts from my political opponents, I had not then acquired an equal protective covering against attacks from behind.

In another encounter, later, with members of my own Party I was probably more to blame. I was responsible for introducing and piloting through the House one of the periodic Local Loans Bills by means of which the smaller Local Authorities are enabled to borrow money at a reasonably low rate of interest. A committee of financial experts had to be set up to investigate these loans as demands arose for them and, at the suggestion of my officials, I proposed to reappoint without alteration the men who had sat on it in previous years. Some of the Labour Party took strong exception to one of the names, and demanded that new men with more progressive sympathies should be appointed. A storm blew up during the debate and discussion of the Bill had to be adjourned. After Snowden had come to my rescue and explained the position to the Party in private, a compromise solution was ultimately effected.

The outstanding financial event of the year is of course the annual Budget, and members of all Parties looked forward with keen expectation to the proposals which Snowden would announce in 1930. He certainly did not disappoint them. There were large changes in taxation, putting heavier direct burdens on the richer classes, and complicated proposals for stopping up the leaks caused by avoidance or evasion of the law. There was also an advance notice of his intention to institute the taxation of land values in the succeeding year. Everyone realized that it was a highly controversial Budget that would arouse deep animosity in certain sections and encounter fierce opposition in its passage through the House.

\* Even as it was, in 1939, when Germany overran Czecho-Slovakia, the Bank of England at the direction of the Bank of International Settlements handed over a large sum in gold to Germany contrary to the wish of the House of Commons.

For many years previously, it had been the custom of a very wealthy Member of Parliament, Mr Samuel Samuel, to give a dinner party in the House of Commons on the night after the Chancellor had made his Budget speech. To this he was in the habit of inviting the Prime Minister of the day and any of his predecessors still in the House, the present and past Chancellors of the Exchequer and several other ministers, including the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. His remaining guests were leading financial men in the City of London. On the present occasion he carried out the programme without alteration. We all met, and had a most interesting party. Naturally we did not discuss the proposals contained in the Budget, but we did discuss other questions of financial import and we drank to the solitary toast of 'The Public Purse'. I have often thought how particularly British this function was, and how like the General Strike) it would have been utterly unintelligible to any foreigner not steeped in our traditions. He would probably have concluded that it was all part of British hypocrisy. Either our apparent friendliness at dinner must be a veneer covering fierce personal enmity within, or our subsequent conflict in the House must be a sham fight, or possibly both. He would, of course, have been quite wrong.

Next day on the floor of the House the battle was joined in grim earnest, and continued to rage with short intervals until the end of July. So far as the Speaker would permit, every clause in the Bill, every line, every word was debated. Night after night we sat for many hours past the usual 11 o'clock time for adjournment. Once, the sitting lasted right on till 12.30 in the afternoon of the following day, and I occupied my place on the Treasury bench nearly the whole of that time. The principal protagonist on our side was, of course, my immediate chief, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the other side, Winston Churchill, leading the opposition to the Bill, exhausted every device known to Parliament to hamper and delay its passage into law. The House watched the encounter between these forensic giants in the spirit of spectators at a prize fight, and partisans cheered every sally of their own man enthusiastically. The one relief from the spate of words was the periodic march through the division lobby, when members of the Liberal Party usually came to our aid in defeating our Conservative opponents.

But though the House, from one point of view, enjoyed the conflict and admired the principal combatants, from another it was somewhat ashamed of the proceedings. It felt that at the end there was not much to show for these long wearisome wasted hours. Snowden, it was said, was quite justified in holding firm with an iron hand for the whole substance of his Bill, but he might with advantage have clothed it in the velvet glove of more conciliatory Parliamentary procedure. Churchill, in spite of, or because of, the adroitness of his political tactics, had only increased the suspicion of many people in the country that the main reason for the opposition of the Conservative Party to the Budget was that its rich supporters did not relish having to bear a heavier burden of taxation.

addressed before, I rose with some trepidation to make the final reply. I began by paying a tribute to his wit which members had so greatly enjoyed, and I went on

"But I am quite sure that, as usual, there is one man in this House who has enjoyed it far more than anyone else, and that gentleman is the right hon Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr Churchill). I sometimes wonder whether he would enjoy himself quite so much if he did not mistake hilarity for admiration and mirth for respect."

I then pointed out that Churchill had just been claiming success for his tactics on the ground that they had hindered and prevented the Labour Government from carrying out much other business during the session. I commented on the fact that this had not been his declared object while the struggle was in progress.

"At the time, he told us that his object in carrying on the debates was to prevent the Chancellor of the Exchequer from carrying out his financial intentions in their entirety. In fact, we have in the Bill as it comes before us today, in every essential particular, the proposals which my right hon Friend put forward in his Budget, and the reason why the right hon Gentleman the Member for Epping comes down to the House and treats us to this wonderful persiflage, is that he knows that he has been beaten on the Budget. He told my right hon Friend that he would compel him to cut out Clauses of his Bill and to modify others, and that the Opposition could force him to take that course. In fact, we have the Bill, and we have everything that my right hon Friend proposed. My right hon Friend has got the money that he requires for the National Exchequer, and he has got it in the way that he proposed. He has erected the barriers against tax evasion which he intended to erect."

proceeded to justify my assertion by an analysis of the Bill as it was giving the House

Though my speech appealed primarily to members of the Labour Party, and to the Liberals who had supported us, I am satisfied from what I heard afterwards that a number of Conservatives secretly shared my view. The fact is that deliberate obstruction is not inherently congenial to the British temperament and is alien to the spirit of the House of Commons. It was invented by the Irish members, who practised it with great relish at the time of the struggle for Home Rule. Though this issue had been decided before I entered the House, and most of the Irishmen had ceased to come to Westminster, one of their number, Joe Devlin, still sat for an Ulster constituency. One day he was explaining to us the art of obstruction. "Sometimes," he said, "when I have been speaking for a long time I am stumped for a fresh idea on which to dilate. To fill in the interval, while I am collecting my thoughts, I stretch out my arm and pointing to the other side of the House I say, 'It is all very well for members opposite to laugh and jeer.' On one occasion after using this cliché I looked across. There was only one member on the benches opposite and he was asleep!"

One of the common mistakes made by outsiders with regard to the House of Commons is to imagine that on every subject that comes up there is acute controversy. In fact, it is probably true to say that at least two-thirds of the business of the House is transacted by common consent. When such matters are under discussion there may be some differences of opinion, but they are confined to questions of detail and, as often as not, cut right across Party lines. The interest then lies in the varied experiences which members of the House bring to bear on the subject. Thus I have taken part in debates on prison reform when contributions have been made by the Home Secretary and his predecessors in office, by ex prison-governors, by ex warders, by prison visitors and by ex prisoners like myself. Such debates evoke no spirit of hostility and often bear much good fruit.

In some respects the House of Commons resembles a big family party, and it is no wonder that men who have worked together, eaten together, played together, and spoken to and at one another, day in and day out for years on end, should come to understand one another, and appreciate the strong and weak points in one another's make-up. The House loves to listen to speeches in which these individual characteristics are recognized and dwelt upon. That is one of the reasons why a new member who naturally cannot at first appreciate these differences, and is inclined to lump all members of a Party together, needs to serve a long political apprenticeship before he can make the kind of speech which the House likes to hear.

It would be quite wrong, however, to infer from all this that the wordy battles in which Parliament engages are sham fights, or that they are like the disputes in the Law Courts between counsel, who are voicing not their own but their clients' opinions. Vital issues do arise, generally on Party lines, and then deep feeling is aroused. On these occasions the Government can rely on its majority to enforce its will in the last resort. But its Achilles' heel is the element of time, and the Opposition can strike at this by insisting on having full opportunity to state its case. The House of Commons is jealous of the rights of minorities, and its rules of procedure allow considerable latitude for such discussions, but if they are carried to the point of deliberate obstruction, the Government can call into play various devices for terminating the debate. Of these the simplest is the closure, invented by Mr Gladstone to deal with Irish intransigency, but since his day further refinements have been introduced known to members as the 'kangaroo' and the 'guillotine',\* designed still further to accelerate proceedings.

None of these devices, however, is really satisfactory to either side. The Government find that the passage of a complicated Bill is still very heavy going, and the Opposition find that the time, which ought to have been devoted to exposing to the country the most highly contentious parts of the measure, has been dissipated by prolonged discussion of trivial matters. Accordingly, during the time that I have sat in the House of Commons I have witnessed a great change in the conduct of business. In my first three Parliaments, from 1923 to 1931, obstruction and its antidotes were employed extensively by each side in turn. But in the Parliament

\* The kangaroo or powers the Chairman to jump over certain amendments, and the 'guillotine' closures whole sections of the Bill according to a time-table arranged to advance.

elected in 1935, even before the Coalition Government was formed, a compromise was generally effected. The Opposition got more time for discussion than they would have been allotted under 'guillotine' procedure. They were able to concentrate on the most contentious points, and to stage the debate on them at the best time of day. The Government got an agreed time-table, and members, generally, knew when the principal divisions would be taken. Of course there always remained in the background the alternative of obstruction, closure, all night sittings—in a word political war—but it was rarely resorted to.

In the period with which this chapter is concerned, however, that of the Parliament of 1929-31, no such relief was available for the Labour Government, and our difficulties were greatly increased by the fact that we controlled only a minority of votes in the House. It is true that in general the Liberals supported us, but that was by no means always the case. Once during the Budget discussions in 1930 we only scraped through by a margin of two votes, and on several other occasions single figure majorities were recorded. In fact we never could be certain, when we came down to the House in the afternoon, that we should survive defeat until it rose at night.

Moreover, we ran 'right into what Winston Churchill once called the 'economic blizzard', the inevitable consequence of the restoration of the gold standard, and of the deflationary policies of the Bank of England and the Federal Reserve Banks of the U.S.A., which had led to a continuous fall in prices. This in turn created world wide unemployment, industrial depression and financial embarrassments, and each one of these had political repercussions. It was only to be expected that we should have to bear the blame for the rising numbers of the unemployed, and that both Liberals and Tories, as well as our own extreme left-wing, would exploit the situation against us to the full. We had no major remedy to propose, but we kept in benefit the long-term unemployed, who had dropped out of insurance, and we promoted schemes of work of national importance on a very considerable scale. I remember that when I was expounding this programme one day in the House I was told by Mr Lloyd George that it was quite inadequate and that he would have us spend far larger sums which should be met by borrowing.

Another Liberal, however, saw the matter from a different angle. This was Sir Donald Maclean, who had led the Party in the 1918-1922 Parliament. He moved a motion calling attention to the growth of indebtedness and its effect upon the public purse and demanding an enquiry. As this had the support of most of his Liberal colleagues and of the whole of the Conservative Party, the Government felt that it could not be resisted and a committee was set up with Sir George May as chairman. The findings of this committee, as I shall subsequently narrate, played an important part in the overthrow of the Labour Government and the installation in its place of a Coalition, composed mostly of Conservatives, who threw over Free Trade and carried out other policies, of which I feel sure that Sir Donald, as a genuine friend of Labour ideas, must have disapproved. I often wonder whether, if he could have foreseen the consequences of his own action, he would have held his hand.

The industrial depression had another disintegrating effect on the Liberal Party. Various countries, trying to insulate themselves from the

general misfortune, raised their tariff walls. British manufacturers, faced with exclusion from world markets, began to clamour for the abandonment of the traditional Free Trade policy of this country. This was in line with Conservative views, but contrary to the hitherto accepted doctrine of Liberals. Some of them now began to show signs of wavering on the question and among the most prominent of these was Sir John Simon. This drew from Mr Lloyd George a speech which was one of the wittiest I have ever listened to. His place in the House of Commons was immediately in front of his colleague and 'the gangway' separated the two of them from the seats which were occupied by the Tories. Mr Lloyd George began by comparing Sir John to a lifelong teetotaler indulging in his first drop of drink. 'After a time,' he said—I quote from memory—"he begins to sway from side to side"—Mr Lloyd George stretched out his arm and pointed alternately to each side of the gangway—"from side to side," he repeated, "until he finds his last resting place in the inebriates' home." The accusing hand had now become stationary and pointed unswervingly to the Conservative benches. The House was convulsed with laughter.

For the most part I found my work at the Treasury congenial, and I got on excellently with my officials. It was a great pleasure to be among men who were so quick in the uptake and who came to the point at once without any hawing. I established very happy relations with my personal secretaries, first with Mr Myrddin Evans, a Welshman, who initiated me into my duties most efficiently, and secondly, when he was translated to a higher sphere, with Mr Alexander Glen, a Scotsman, who worked most loyally with me until the termination of my official position. I took part in the annual Treasury lawn-tennis tournament, and in this way came in touch with some of the junior members of the staff.

In general, I found myself in agreement with the Treasury point of view, both in routine matters relating to the outside public, and in questions where differences between various Ministers had to be resolved. On higher financial issues I was not equally satisfied. I found a tendency in the Treasury, which I suspect is common to other government offices, to treat the junior Minister much as an indulgent governess treats the young hopeful entrusted to her charge. Within narrow limits he can have his way, beyond that, it is a case of 'We had better ask Papa, dear.' Of course every sensible Under-Secretary recognizes that in matters of high policy his chief must make the decision, and that he must conform to it or resign. What I claimed was that where I had special knowledge or held strong views I should have at least an equal opportunity with the Treasury officials of being heard before that decision was reached.

Philip Snowden himself most willingly conceded this, in fact, from the outset he expressly invited me to come to see him to discuss any matter in which I was interested, and he was always as good as his word. But what happened in practice was that the Treasury officials had prior knowledge of questions that were coming up, and that they went to the Chancellor and got his agreement before I had the chance of stating my case. More often than not this arose quite naturally from the necessity of making quick decisions in busy times on urgent matters. But there were occasions when I was convinced that I had been by-passed of deliberate purpose.



The most flagrant example was a case when the Cabinet had appointed a Treasury official and myself as joint members of a departmental committee. In between two of its sittings I was confronted with a document signed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in which all the issues affecting the Treasury were settled. As I knew that Snowden had no independent knowledge of any of these detailed questions, I realized that my colleague, without any prior consultation with me, had simply decided them all himself, had written down his views and had gone to the Chancellor and got his endorsement. I was naturally very angry at this, and sent for one of the highest Treasury officials and secured his apology and an undertaking that such a discourtesy would not be repeated.

One day when I was in my office Sir Richard Hopkins brought in a visitor to see me, Mr. Montagu Norman, the Governor of the Bank of England. He told me that, though I should not remember it, this was not our first meeting, for he had been a small boy at Eton when I was Captain of the Oppidans. I saw him on many occasions after that, particularly when Snowden was away ill, and he gave me much valuable information and advice. It was easy to understand how with his wide knowledge and experience and his engaging personality he had acquired such a dominating influence. Nevertheless, I did not become a convert to his basic views on financial policy.

It was a matter of surprise to me, while I was Financial Secretary, that though there were able men at the Treasury who were quite competent to form their own views and take an independent line on questions of foreign exchange and the price of money, the Governor's opinion appeared to be accepted almost without question. I remember in particular one occasion when a most important financial issue arose in a Cabinet committee of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a leading Treasury expert and myself were all members. We were unanimous in our view as to the right decision, but it was agreed that, before action was taken on it the Governor should be asked to express an opinion. I imagined that after he had been heard there would be a further consultation, but when I arrived at the committee next morning I found that the decision which we had all reached the day before had, in deference to his view, been exactly reversed.

Since my time at the Treasury the position has been entirely altered. When the Exchange Equalization Account was created in 1932 the House of Commons insisted that it should be controlled, not by the Bank, but by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is, of course, ultimately responsible to Parliament. He had therefore to be prepared to answer questions in the House relating to currency and foreign exchange. This compelled the Treasury to study the problem independently, and to formulate a policy of its own with regard to it. In consequence, in recent years the views of the Governor have not always prevailed, and it is common knowledge that the policy of cheap money has been pursued by successive Chancellors of the Exchequer contrary to his predilections.

In the spring of 1931, Snowden underwent a serious operation which compelled his absence, for several weeks, from the House of Commons. This threw on me a considerable amount of extra work, including the formulation of the details of his scheme for the taxation of land values on which I had the invaluable assistance of Sir Stafford Cripps, who had

become Solicitor-General. Of course all major issues were submitted to Snowden himself. I also decided that it was of importance, in view of the interest that was being shown by foreign countries in the state of the British finances, to make a small technical change in the form in which the annual accounts were presented in April. I had the greatest difficulty in getting this through. Though all the high Treasury officials whom I had to consult admitted that the alteration would be a distinct improvement, they insisted that it was necessary to 'ask Papa', who was in the country in the earlier stages of his convalescence. Fortunately someone was going down to see him there, and his consent (never really in doubt) was obtained just in time for the change to be effected.

There was some question whether Snowden would be well enough to deliver the usual Budget speech, and there was a suggestion that either I or some Cabinet Minister should read it in his stead. But he brushed all those proposals aside, and insisted on facing the ordeal himself. Changes that year in ordinary taxes were few and slight, and interest centred on the proposals for the taxation of land values which Snowden explained in some detail and with obvious satisfaction. The Tories left us in no doubt as to their intention to oppose this scheme by every means in their power. But Mr Lloyd George praised it, and urged Snowden not to make concessions. I remembered this advice afterwards when members of the Liberal Party took up an uncompromising attitude in the opposite direction. However, for the moment we had their support.

When the time came for the proposals to be embodied in the Finance Bill, I was instructed to interview some of the Conservative leaders to see whether an arrangement could be made for an agreed time-table for the discussion of the measure. After consulting their Party they reported to me that so strong was the opposition that no such arrangement was possible. I then told them that my chief was not prepared to repeat the gruelling experience of the previous year and that, in default of agreement, we should probably impose a forced time-table by guillotine. I was given to understand that, much as they would resent this unprecedented action with regard to a Finance Bill, they would prefer to submit to it under duress than voluntarily to limit discussion. After that, it was clear that no settlement was possible, and Snowden, with the backing of Lloyd George, secured the rather reluctant consent of the Prime Minister to the introduction of a guillotine motion, which was in due course carried through the House.

The outstanding feature of the debate on the Bill itself was the brilliant advocacy of Sir Stafford Cripps, who, as successive clauses came up for discussion, confounded the arguments of the Conservatives. But their hostility was not reduced, and I am convinced that from this time on they made up their minds that by hook or by crook they would destroy the Labour Government. All went well with us, however, so long as the Liberals continued, when the division bell rang, to troop through the lobby to support us. But the time came when revolt broke out in their ranks. Prompted no doubt by the landowning interests, they tabled an amendment drastically reducing the proposed taxation, and they made it clear to us that if necessary they would carry it to a division. Iaced with the prospect of defeat, the Cabinet decided not to resist the amendment, and Snowden bowed to this decision, though it was common knowledge that

he was opposed to it. In its truncated form the Bill was carried through the House of Commons, and as the Lords were prohibited by the Parliament Act from making amendments, it became law without further alterations.

Only a few weeks were now left before the summer recess, and it seemed not only as if most of our immediate political troubles were over, but that there was a prospect of a solution of certain wide outstanding problems. There was a light on the international horizon in the Disarmament Conference, over which Arthur Henderson, the Foreign Secretary, had been chosen by his foreign colleagues to preside. There was a hope of an Indian settlement in the wide acceptance, by all sections, of the invitation to attend the forthcoming second session of the Round Table Conference. The one intractable problem was the industrial depression, with its consequent growth of unemployment and disturbance to financial equilibrium here and elsewhere. There might also be international repercussions of the failure in mid-Europe of the Credit Anstalt. But it did not occur to me that either of these was likely to alter the political situation in the early future. When therefore the recess actually came at the beginning of August, I went with my friend Hankinson on my annual excursion in a rowing-boat down the Thames without misgiving.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE GOLD CRISIS

Three British committees—Failure of European banks—Run on gold—The May report—A Budget deficit—Cabinet crisis—A meeting in Downing Street—Out of office—MacDonald's forecast—Cuts in salaries—Off the gold standard—General election—The doctor's mandate—An election red herring—Defeat in Leicester

THREE important committees presented their reports just about the time that Parliament rose for its summer recess. The first of these dealt with the rates of pay in the Civil Service with which I as Financial Secretary was directly concerned. It recommended that the sliding scale, by which wages rose and fell with the cost of living, should cease to operate, and that the wages of the lowest grades of civil servants should be stabilized substantially above the rate corresponding to the existing level of prices.

The second, known as the Macmillan Committee, appointed by Snowden soon after taking office, reported on the banking and financial system of the country. Among a great many important recommendations it criticized the machinery of the City of London for lending money. It showed that while some British firms operating in this country were having difficulty in obtaining capital, large sums were continually flowing out to foreign users. What was worse, there was no authority, not even the Bank of England, which knew accurately the total amount of the money so lent abroad. This was all the more serious because the ultimate basis of this money was the gold in the Bank of England, a great part of which had been deposited there by foreigners and could be withdrawn by

them whenever they chose to do so. In banking language, the City of London as a whole had borrowed short and lent long, to an alarming and unknown extent.

The third committee which had arisen out of Sir Donald Maclean's resolution in the House of Commons of a few months previously, and was known by the name of the chairman, Sir George May, reported on the state of national expenditure. It painted a lurid picture of unbalanced Budgets. The chief gravamen of its charge related to the moneys which were being paid out week by week to the steadily growing numbers of the unemployed. These moneys did not come directly out of the Exchequer, but from the Unemployment Fund, which was fed by fixed payments from employers, workers and the State. Originally this Fund had been designed to be self balancing. But successive Governments had found it impossible to cut men out of benefit when they remained unemployed after their period of insurance had run out, and they had continued to pay them out of the Fund. To replenish it they had borrowed whenever it was necessary, and the Labour Government had continued this practice. Latterly, these borrowings had grown in frequency and amount.

The May report took exception to this, and treated all such outgoings as current expenditure, which in a sense they were. But the report went further than this in putting an unfavourable complexion on the position of the Exchequer. Snowden, in accordance with precedent, had budgeted for a surplus of £50 millions to be used as a sinking fund for the extinction of debt. It had already become clear that (apart from any question of the unemployment money) the whole of this £50 millions would not materialize. The May Committee chose to designate the amount by which the surplus would so fall short as a 'deficit'. On these premises it reached the conclusion that there would be a considerable deficit for the current year, 1931-2, and a deficit of no less than £120 millions in 1932-3, unless changes were made. It accordingly recommended substantial cuts in salaries and wages paid out of public funds, and in the social services, including unemployment relief.

£100 millions of this was needed at home, so that only some £32 millions of free gold was available, and the Bank feared that in a few further days this might be gone

Accordingly it endeavoured to improve its position in two ways. First, it obtained permission of the Treasury to increase the fiduciary issue by £15 millions, thereby reducing the amount of gold needed as a reserve against the home currency from £100 millions to £85 millions. Secondly it procured credits of £25 millions each, from the Bank of France and from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. These combined actions increased the effective strength of the Bank by £65 millions, but at the same time they advertised the serious position, and by so doing reduced confidence in the stability of the Bank.

It will be observed that all this happened before the end of July 1931 and that up to that time the crisis was a purely banking affair. Responsibility for it must be shared between those who had originally created the Reparations tangle, those who had passed the inelastic currency laws of 1925 and 1928, and the Bank of England and the City of London, which had got themselves into the immediate difficulty by over-lending abroad. It was not until the beginning of August that the Labour Government became involved, and then only because the Bank found that its desperate efforts were proving unavailing and that it wanted to obtain further credits from France and U S A.

It was at this juncture that the May report was published. Scare headlines in the Press at home and abroad epitomized its findings as 'a deficit of £120 millions in the British Budget'. As I have already explained, this was a misrepresentation of the facts. In the last completed year, 1930-31, debt had actually been paid off. In the current year, 1931-2, debt stood to be increased only by a few millions, even if payments for unemployment were all included as expenditure. It was not till 1932-3 that, as against a desired reduction of debt by £50 millions, an increase of some £70 millions was anticipated, and then only if no changes on either side of the account were effected in the meantime.

But the scare headlines had done their work, and the Prime Minister was confronted with an ultimatum which he reported to the Cabinet. It appeared that the French and American Banks were not prepared to lend any more money to the Bank of England so long as the British Budget 'remained unbalanced'. The fact that France had had substantial deficits for years past, and that the U S A had had a realized deficit of £180 millions in the previous year, and had a prospective deficit of no less than £300 millions for the current year, counted for nothing. Borrowers must conform to such conditions as creditors impose. It was even whispered, though I believe without any foundation, that the foreign banks had insisted on a reduction in British unemployment relief. If the Cabinet were not able or willing to accede to the wishes of the banking world, the Bank of England, they were told, would be unable to meet its liabilities and Britain would have to go off the gold standard.

Only a very few days of my August holiday had gone before I got wind of the trouble, and I rushed up at once to London and to the Treasury. There I was told as much as it was thought proper for a junior Minister to know. The Cabinet was facing the alternative of going off the gold standard with all the uncertain consequences of that grave step, or of

them whenever they chose to do so. In banking language, the City of London as a whole had borrowed short and lent long, to an alarming and unknown extent.

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£100 millions of this was needed at home, so that only some £32 millions of free gold was available, and the Bank feared that in a few further days this might be gone

Accordingly it endeavoured to improve its position in two ways. First, it obtained permission of the Treasury to increase the fiduciary issue by £15 millions, thereby reducing the amount of gold needed as a reserve against the home currency from £100 millions to £85 millions. Secondly it procured credits of £25 millions each, from the Bank of France and from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. These combined actions increased the effective strength of the Bank by £65 millions, but at the same time they advertised the serious position, and by so doing reduced confidence in the stability of the Bank.

It will be observed that all this happened before the end of July 1931 and that up to that time the crisis was a purely banking affair. Responsibility for it must be shared between those who had originally created the Reparations tangle, those who had passed the inelastic currency laws of 1925 and 1928, and the Bank of England and the City of London, which had got themselves into the immediate difficulty by over-lending abroad. It was not until the beginning of August that the Labour Government became involved, and then only because the Bank found that its desperate efforts were proving unavailing and that it wanted to obtain further credits from France and U S A.

It was at this juncture that the May report was published. Scare headlines in the Press at home and abroad epitomized its findings as 'a deficit of £120 millions in the British Budget'. As I have already explained, this was a misrepresentation of the facts. In the last completed year, 1930-31, debt had actually been paid off, in the current year, 1931-2, debt stood to be increased only by a few millions, even if payments for unemployment were all included as expenditure. It was not till 1932-3 that, as against a desired reduction of debt by £50 millions, an increase of some £70 millions was anticipated, and then only if no changes on either side of the account were effected in the meantime.

But the scare headlines had done their work, and the Prime Minister was confronted with an ultimatum which he reported to the Cabinet. It appeared that the French and American Banks were not prepared to lend any more money to the Bank of England so long as the British Budget 'remained unbalanced'. The fact that France had had substantial deficits for years past, and that the U S A had had a realized deficit of £180 millions in the previous year and had a prospective deficit of no less than £300 millions for the current year, counted for nothing. Borrowers must conform to such conditions as creditors impose. It was even whispered, though I believe without any foundation, that the foreign banks had insisted on a reduction in British unemployment relief. If the Cabinet were not able or willing to accede to the wishes of the banking world, the Bank of England, they were told, would be unable to meet its liabilities and Britain would have to go off the gold standard.

Only a very few days of my August holiday had gone before I got wind of the trouble, and I rushed up at once to London and to the Treasury. There I was told as much as it was thought proper for a junior Minister to know. The Cabinet was facing the alternative of going off the gold standard with all the uncertain consequences of that grave step, or of

making immediate cuts in the national expenditure. There would have to be reductions, it was said, in the income of everyone, from the Prime Minister to the neediest unemployed man and woman. Contractual obligations to soldiers and sailors and other public employees must be modified, and the social services must be reduced. Last, but not least in my eyes as Financial Secretary, the long awaited improvement in the lot of the most poorly paid civil servants must be withheld, and a cut imposed instead.

I had never been enamoured of our return to the gold standard, but I confess that, now that we were on it, I regarded its abandonment as a dangerous leap in the dark. Nevertheless, the proposals just outlined seemed to me odious. Moreover, I did not believe they were the right way to save the gold standard. For that purpose, what was required was to peg the exchange by mobilizing\* the foreign investments in the possession of British subjects. This was the method that had been adopted during the previous war, and it was subsequently to be the method used in the present war, until 'Lease and Lend' relieved us of the necessity of paying cash for the munitions supplied to us by the U.S.A. There was no reason to suppose that it would fail† in 1931, and from what happened subsequently I am strengthened in my view that, if the gold standard had to be preserved, it was the only way of trying to do it that was likely to succeed.

As to the Budget, though I did not swallow all the tendentious figures of the May report, I recognized that the rapid growth of unemployment had created a new situation which had to be faced. It was no longer legitimate to borrow continually on account of the Unemployment Fund\* and to pretend that the national finances were not thereby affected. The modern economic theory that, in time of depression, it may be the duty of a Government deliberately to unbalance its budget, had not then been widely promulgated, and I was in favour of making ends meet, if not annually, at any rate over a short term of years. I was therefore prepared to support some reinforcement of the Exchequer by a supplementary Budget for 1931-2, and, unless things improved, considerable changes in 1932-3. I realized, however, that the crisis was not one of scarcity but of abundance, and I repudiated the suggestion that we were 'on the verge of national bankruptcy'. I maintained that, so long as a country as a whole was living within its means (which Britain undoubtedly was), it made little difference to foreigners what was the proportion between taxes and loans in which its citizens sustained the activities of the State.

There was, moreover, a double distinction, which was not commonly recognized, between credits given to foreign countries by British financiers and moneys given to our own unemployed on the credit of the British Exchequer. From the point of view of national well being, the former

\* My attention was called to this proposal by two powerful articles written by a financial expert in the *Manchester Guardian*.

† Snowden stated in the course of the September debates in the House of Commons that this proposal was considered and rejected 'because the steps necessary to have obtained possession of these securities would have taken too long. I cannot accept this view. Considerable blocks of them were held in a few hands and could have been collected in a few hours. But in all probability the mere announcement that this action was to be taken, signed by the leaders of all three Parties, would have been sufficient.



served no useful purpose except to bring speculative profits to the City of London, whereas the latter sustained the standard of life of our people through a period of difficulty. From the point of view of finance, the former was liable to create a 'run on the Bank' for gold, whereas the latter, at worst, increased the internal debt which the State owed to some of its own subjects.

I never had the opportunity of discussing all this with Snowden, but I caught him for a moment and expressed to him my concern about the pay of civil servants, and I wrote him a letter regarding the mobilization of assets. I also wrote an urgent letter to the Prime Minister to the same effect and asked to be allowed to put my views before him. I got a letter from him in reply telling me to hold myself in readiness to wait on him. Meanwhile Susan Lawrence (who, I may remark in passing, is not a relation of mine) came to see me. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, she was more especially concerned with the proposed cuts in unemployment relief, which she regarded as dreadful. We discussed the whole situation and agreed that, if the Cabinet decided to accept the cuts in their entirety, we would both resign from the Government.

Meanwhile, for three whole days and nights the Cabinet sat in almost continuous session, with brief intervals for sleep and meals. As immediate legislation might be necessary, the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Parties were informed of the situation, and the Prime Minister conveyed their views to his Cabinet colleagues. Labour Ministers said afterwards that they got the impression that, as fast as they agreed provisionally to any proposals, the conditions were set higher against them. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that they were told that, unless they agreed to the cuts, the pound might depreciate indefinitely and the blame for that would rest upon them. So cleverly had the crisis, born in the City and in the Bank of England, been laid on the doorstep of the Labour Government.

At last I got my summons from the Prime Minister, and went to Downing Street at the hour appointed, expecting a personal interview. I found a concourse of junior Ministers arriving at the same time. We went in and were sat round a table. MacDonald proceeded to address us. He told us that, when he had summoned us, it had been to inform us that in common with Cabinet Ministers we should have to suffer a cut in our salaries, but since then the situation had changed, and he had now to tell us that we were to have no salaries at all—a somewhat tactless pleasantry, which meant that we were dismissed! He gave a short account of the crisis, told us that the Cabinet had broken up and that he was forming a 'National' Government with Conservative and Liberal colleagues. He made no appeal to those present to stand in with him, but urged them to consult their own interests—which I am afraid I rather cynically interpreted to mean that he preferred their room to their company. He promised us that he would be no party to a 'coupon' election, a reference to what had happened in 1918. He closed the meeting abruptly, saying he had important business to transact. As we all filed past to say good bye, he detained me for a moment, and said he thought I might be willing to stay with the new Government, but I declined the suggestion. I had already decided to resign even if the whole Cabinet had agreed to

the 'cuts' programme, I was certainly not going to support it when they had rejected it

As I left Downing Street, I experienced a distinct sense of relief, and recalled the saying that, if the proudest moment in a man's life is when he takes up office, the happiest is when he lays it down. I had been greatly disturbed at the policy which it seemed was being thrust upon the Labour Government, and at the suggestion that, by rejecting it, they would be running away from reality and plunging the country into an inflationary abyss. I had feared that I should be placed on the horns of a dilemma, and should be compelled either to dissociate myself from my colleagues, or to share their responsibility. Both were repugnant to me. By the stand taken by the Cabinet and by MacDonald's decision to head a Coalition, I was released from the necessity of choosing either alternative.

I attended a hastily summoned meeting of the whole Parliamentary Party, at which Arthur Henderson was appointed leader in place of MacDonald and I was elected to the Executive. I circulated among my colleagues a memorandum on the situation. I found both ex-Ministers and rank and file bewildered and distressed for many of them had been quite unprepared for the catastrophic turn of events. What troubled them most of all was to account for the action of MacDonald. He had been their champion, the man to whom they had given their confidence and their loyalty. Now he had joined the ranks of their political enemies, and had taken Philip Snowden and Jimmy Thomas with him. Was it sheer apostasy for which perhaps he had long prepared? Or could it be the dreadful truth that he and they were right and that all the rest of us were dreamers, for whom there was no place in a world of hard reality?

I have never had any doubt in my own mind as to the correct answer to this conundrum. MacDonald and Snowden quite genuinely believed the case that was put up to them by official opinion in the City, at the Bank, and in the Treasury. It was only natural that they should do so, because, to the best of my knowledge, they never took the trouble to inform themselves of the contrary opinion that was held by a number of other men of high financial standing. They therefore accepted, at its face value, the advice tendered by the persons in the City who, having been primarily responsible for the crisis, were only too anxious to transfer the onus for it on to other shoulders. But while this is true, it must also be remembered that, for years past, both of them, and MacDonald in particular, had been subjected to a great deal of carping criticism from the left-wing of the Labour Party, and that they were not sorry to free themselves from it.

As to the merits of the case itself, they were speedily to be put to the test of events, the sequence of which I will proceed to relate. Parliament was called together on September 8 and MacDonald gave his account of what had happened. He depicted the dire consequences which would result from going off the gold standard. The pound would drop like the German mark, prices would rise indefinitely, salaries, wages, and unemployment benefit, though retaining their money value, would continue to fall in purchasing power until they were almost valueless. Compared with such a catastrophe a strictly regulated system of cuts was a mild

unpleasantness. An acrimonious debate followed which threw more heat than light on the controversy.

On September 10, Snowden introduced a revised Budget for 1931-2, and gave an account of the state of the national finances even more gloomy than the May report itself. He imposed fresh taxes of all kinds. On September 14 the Economy Bill was introduced. The Government announced cuts in the receipts of all persons drawing money from public funds. Judges, Cabinet Ministers, M.P.s, teachers, civil servants, members of the Forces, and the unemployed all were to suffer. It was hotly contested by the Labour Opposition. On September 17 it was reported to the House of Commons that a mutiny had occurred in the Atlantic Fleet in consequence of the cuts in seamen's pay. This report was authenticated and obtained widespread international publicity.

On September 21, the Government came down to the House to ask for the passage, through all its stages in one day, of a Bill abrogating the gold standard. They explained that on the formation of the National Government, with its undertaking to balance the Budget, the Bank of England had secured its big credits from France and U.S.A., but that the drain of gold had continued at such a rate that it was evident that these would be speedily exhausted. The Bank must therefore be relieved of its obligation to pay out gold before it broke the law under duress. The Bill was accordingly passed without opposition.

The exchange value of the £ almost immediately fell by about one fifth in terms of currencies such as the dollar, which were based on gold. But after that it fell only a little further and then it remained nearly stable. Several countries, moreover notably Scandinavia, went off gold simultaneously with ourselves and remained linked to sterling. Further, the general level of wholesale prices in Britain rose only by about 7 per cent and retail prices showed still less change. It was noticeable that with the departure from gold the British export trades began to revive.

Thus nearly all the prognostications of MacDonald and his Government had been belied. Their cuts programme had not saved the gold standard. Though they had delayed by a few weeks the culmination of the crisis, they had not enabled the Bank of England to meet its obligations in gold. On the contrary, by all this talk about national bankruptcy, and by causing a mutiny in the fleet, they had increased the foreign lack of confidence in this country. The departure from gold had not resulted in unlimited inflation, instead, it had been found quite possible to control the extent of the rise in the price level. Finally, the failure of the Bank to maintain an artificially overvalued pound, so far from ruining British industry, had provided a welcome relief to the harassed export trades.

I had taken an active part in debate in opposition to the case put by MacDonald and, now that his forecast had been proved wrong in almost every particular, I looked for some reaction. But I looked in vain. Inside the House of Commons, Conservatives, who were no doubt grateful to him for having broken up the unity of their opponents, continued to acclaim him as the saviour of his country, and the general public, with the help of a friendly Press, accepted the same attitude towards him and his policy.

For me personally the month had been an exceptionally busy one. In addition to my work on the Executive, on the front Opposition bench, and in a committee room upstairs helping to draft a Party programme for a possible general election, I had undertaken at the suggestion of a publisher to write a book\* of 25,000 words on the crisis. He had asked for it to be done in three weeks, and it would have been ready in time, but, just as I was finishing it, the gold standard was abandoned and the last chapters had to be rewritten. Finally, I had to prepare myself for the autumn session of the Indian Round Table Conference, of which I had been made a member earlier in the year, I will reserve an account of this for the next chapter.

Towards the end of September, the Prime Minister was faced with a new decision. The Conservatives who formed the bulk of his supporters in the House of Commons were pressing him to have a general election. For this, no genuine national necessity could be alleged. The cuts had been enacted, the Budget had been meticulously balanced, and in the existing House of Commons, with over two years of its term still to run, there was no danger of this policy being reversed. Moreover, MacDonald had given express promises that he would be no party to a 'coupon' election in which the scales would be weighted against his former colleagues. But the Conservatives were obdurate, and I have no doubt that they made it plain to him that unless he bowed to their wishes he would have to make way for a Conservative Prime Minister. It was a most critical decision for him to make. If he had resisted their demand, he would have preserved his own independence and might possibly have reintegrated the progressive forces of the country. But he yielded, and from that time onward became little more than a prisoner in the hands of the Tory Party and the instrument of their policy. Parliament was dissolved on October 7 and polling day was fixed for October 27.

The Labour Party started the contest at a hopeless disadvantage. The leaders, whom it had extolled only a few short months before, were campaigning vigorously against it. The daily Press, with the solitary exception of the *Daily Herald*, was united in heaping on its members opprobrious epithets. The electorate could not be expected to understand the technical intricacies of the financial situation. The only thing on the other side was that the Government Parties were divided among themselves as to any positive remedy for the industrial depression, in particular, some of them wanted to introduce a general Tariff system while others adhered to Free Trade. To meet this difficulty they adopted the slogan of 'the doctor's mandate', surely the most gigantic piece of spoof ever put across at an election!

At the last week-end before the poll a new hare was started by Walter Runciman and supported by Philip Snowden. It was to the effect that, if the seceding members of the Labour Cabinet had had their way, the Post Office savings of the people would have had to be drawn upon to meet the payments to the unemployed. Thus was one of those outrageous half-truths which convey a more false impression

\* *This Gold Crisis* (Victor Gollancz 3s. 6d. net) It was translated into Japanese.

than many express lies which can be exposed and refuted. It was literally true that the moneys required weekly to reinforce the unemployment fund had to be found from increasing balances elsewhere, and that as requirements grew, and other funds became exhausted, the new savings in the Post Office would be utilized for the purpose. But the inference that the electorate drew, and were no doubt intended to draw, from this, that their deposits were thereby put in jeopardy, was entirely false.

Of course, from the point of view of a depositor, a Post Office savings account is a kind of money-box, into which he puts his money one day, and from which he can draw it out on another. But it is only a very small part of the money so deposited with it that the Post Office keeps in its full available for withdrawals. The great bulk it invests in public securities, and no security could be safer than a Government-guaranteed investment like the loan to the Unemployment Fund. Behind all such loans are the whole resources of the nation, and default is unthinkable, except on the bankruptcy of the entire community or the deliberate repudiation of all forms of the National Debt.

It was naturally impossible to get this explanation across to the electorate in time to influence their decision, and I have no doubt that many of them went to the poll and voted for the Government candidate in the belief that by so doing they were helping to protect their savings from loss. This exploitation of the ignorance of the mass of the people with regard to financial realities was, of course, only an incident in the political manœuvre, by which the grave miscalculations of financiers were hidden and their power preserved at the expense of the public weal.

It had been expected that the Labour Party would lose some seats at the election, but the magnitude of its defeat exceeded the most extreme prophecy. Only 52 Labour M.P.s were returned to Parliament as against 288 elected in 1929 and against 263 at the dissolution (not counting the MacDonaldites). In Leicester, in consequence of a pact, the Liberal stood down in the East division, and the Conservative in the West, so that I was faced by a single Liberal opponent, a Mr. Pickering, who, as he afterwards explained, took part in the contest for the sake of the experience without any desire to become an M.P. To his intense astonishment and mine, he not only won the seat but polled more than double my vote, the actual figures being 26,826 to 12,923. In this strange fashion was MacDonald avenged in Leicester for the defeat which had been inflicted on him there in 1918!

## CHAPTER XVII

### INDIA AND RUSSIA

The Round Table Conference—Member of the Federal Structure committee—An uncompleted task—Majorca—A visit to U.S.S.R.—A Leningrad financier—The Bank of Russia—Molotov—The Volga boat—Rostov—A prison—Kief—A unique economy—The Five Year Plan—Russian and British life compared

THE fall of the Labour Government in 1931 had not merely domestic significance. It had profound consequences overseas, both within and

without the British Empire. The Labour Party has always had a distinctive international policy, the essence of which is a belief in the interdependence of the well-being of the peoples of the world. It has therefore been opposed to economic self-sufficiency, political isolationism, and the exploitation of subject races.

During the two periods of Labour administration, effect had been given to these views by Ramsay MacDonald, who with his wide foreign associations was a fitting exponent of them. In 1924, as his own Foreign Secretary, he was successful in securing, what at the outset seemed impossible, the simultaneous goodwill of both the French and the German Governments. From 1929 to 1931, with Arthur Henderson at the Foreign Office, steps had been taken to enhance the prestige and influence of the League of Nations, and the British Government had taken the initiative in calling a conference to discuss mutual disarmament. At this conference foreign delegates had done Henderson the honour of electing him as its president. In the British Colonies, Sidney Webb, with the able assistance of Drummond Shiels, had introduced long-overdue Labour legislation. Meanwhile, as Secretary for India, Wedgwood Benn had been making a fresh approach to the intricate problems of that great country.

In all these fields, the fall of the Labour Government and the rout of the Party at the General Election prevented the full harvest from being reaped, for MacDonald, though he remained Prime Minister, was not permitted by the Coalition which he led to pursue his former policy. The Disarmament Conference wilted when the support of the British Government was withdrawn, and Henderson, though he remained its president, ceased to have any power. The pace of colonial legislation was slowed down, and labour unrest in many of the colonies began to take an active shape. *The story of India I will proceed to tell at greater length, for in that I was a direct participant.*

It will be remembered that my wife and I had spent our silver honeymoon in India in 1926, and that we had had the opportunity, while there, of getting in touch with many of its leading personalities. On our return home we did not allow these contacts to lapse. A number of Indians came over from time to time to visit London for various purposes, and the rooms of the *Empire Parliamentary Association* in the House of Commons were opened to them by its secretary, Sir Howard D'Egville. Among these visitors in 1928 was the Pandit Motilal Nehru (the father of Jawaharlal Nehru), and my wife and I had the pleasure of entertaining him to dinner at the House of Commons. We found him very sore at the treatment which was being accorded to India by the British Government, and disinclined to be communicative.

At last, however, by the friendly attitude of our little circle of guests towards Indian problems in general, and towards himself in particular, we thawed out the old man, and we induced him, in reply to the toast of his health, to make a short speech. He expressed his feelings quite frankly, and told us that what Britain had done in India had been quite incomprehensible to him. But on that very day he had been present in the Gallery of the House of Commons when the Prayer Book had been under discussion, a country which would entrust to its popularly elected representatives the task of deciding the fundamental bases of its

religion could well be expected to take equally extraordinary action with regard to other questions!

In November 1927, Mr Baldwin, who was then Prime Minister, had decided that the time had come to prepare for a further step towards Indian self-government, and he had appointed a statutory commission of M P s and peers under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon to go out to India to study the situation on the spot. This method of approach was resented by leading Indian politicians who regarded it as an attempt to settle over their heads the future status of India and who claimed the right to be in at the beginning in the discussion regarding the government of their own country. Nevertheless, the Simon Commission went out to India and came home and made its report. Among other things, it recommended (1) in the provinces, the substitution, for the existing diarchy, of Cabinets answerable over the whole provincial field to elected legislatures, (2) a Federal Assembly for British India constituted by indirect election, (3) a Council for Greater India, in which the Indian States would be associated with British India. But Indians remained suspicious and hostile.

When the Labour Government came in in 1929, it was confronted with a demand for an immediate reversal of policy, and when that was not conceded, disorder broke out afresh. As one who had taken an active part, twenty years previously, in the militant campaign to win votes for women, I had great sympathy with the brave men and women in India who were facing injury and imprisonment in their fight to secure self-government. But I realized the peculiar difficulties of the Labour Government, which had no majority and no certainty of continuance in office. It was no good for us to make promises on behalf of the British nation, when we might not survive to fulfil them. It was essential to carry with us a substantial body of support in other parties. I therefore welcomed the decision in the following year to summon a Round Table Conference and to invite to it representatives of all sections of opinion in both countries.

It will be remembered that when I was in India in 1926 this was the method of approach recommended by Congress itself. But much had happened since then, and Congress leaders, including Mr Gandhi, now declined the invitation to be present. Nevertheless the Conference was attended by prominent Hindus, Moslems, and Sikhs, by Indian princes, by representatives of the depressed classes, Labour, and the British communities in India, as well as by all the three Parties in our own Parliament. The astonishing thing was that, in this diverse assembly, a wide measure of agreement on fundamentals was arrived at. The principle of self government for the whole of India was accepted on the basis of a federal settlement. But the Conference did not in that session complete the work of framing a constitution. It decided to adjourn its sittings for several months in order that the skeleton solution agreed upon might in the meanwhile be clothed with the flesh and blood of practical details, which could later be discussed upon their merits.

Up to that point I had played no part except as an onlooker in the proceedings, but now Wedgwood Benn began to take me into consultation. He told me that I was to serve on the Round Table Conference at its second session in the autumn of 1931, and that I would be appointed

to the committee dealing with federal structure. At his pressing request, I assisted him to redraft some of the official memoranda, in particular one dealing with finance, so as to embody in them the spirit of agreement in place of that of dictation. He kept me informed of his strenuous efforts to secure the attendance of Mr. Gandhi at the Conference, in the face of great difficulties of all kinds, and when at last he was successful, I shared his sense of satisfaction.

During the early summer of 1931 the British section of the Conference met several times to prepare a draft Bill. Some divergence of opinion then began to show itself between the representatives of the British Parties. The Conservatives wanted to introduce a great number of meticulous reservations and safeguards, but Wedgwood Benn and I and the Labour representatives generally took the view that these would defeat their own ends because they would deprive Indian Governments and legislators of responsibility for having to make essential and perhaps unpopular decisions. We got a good deal of our own way, for at that time we were still the Government of the country.

Before, however, the Conference actually met, the earlier of the events described in the last chapter had taken place. MacDonald was at the head of his Coalition, and Benn and I were in Opposition. Nevertheless, outwardly no change was made in the plan of the proceedings or in the scope of the investigation. St. James's Palace was the scene of our deliberations, and we divided up at once into committees. I was placed on the important one dealing with federal structure.

As a mere spectacle, a sitting of this committee presented a remarkable and fascinating picture. It was literally a round table conference in that we sat round the room in a semi-circle with a table in the centre. Lord Sankey occupied the chair in the middle of the long straight side. On his left was Mr. Gandhi, in blanket and loincloth. Next to him was the Pandit Malaviya, a scion of one of the oldest families in India. To his left again were Mrs. Naidu, the poet, and other members of the Congress Party, and then the Indian Liberals, including Sir Tej Saprú, Mr. Jayakar, and Mr. Sastri. Then came Dr. Ambedkar, of the depressed classes, then Mr. Joshi, the labour leader, then the representatives of the Indian Chambers of Commerce, then the Aga Khan, and the other Indian Muslims. To their left were the British community's representatives. Mrs. Subbarayan came next, and then the Princes and Prime Ministers of the Indian States, ending up with the progressive and greatly respected Gaekwar of Baroda. My place was next to his, and to my left were Wedgwood Benn and other Labour delegates, then the British Liberals, then Sir Samuel Hoare, who had in the Coalition Government taken Benn's place as Secretary for India, and so back to Lord Sankey in the chair. All the Indian Princes wore their own gorgeous costumes, and a touch of homely comedy was introduced when, at the beginning of each sitting, an attendant brought in two rugs and wrapped one of them round the knees of Lord Sankey and the other round those of Mr. Gandhi.

It was evident from the first that there was a change of atmosphere corresponding to the change of Government at home, and I am quite sure the Indians felt it. Instead of coming together with us to solve in agreement a problem of world significance in which we were all equally



concerned, they were being given, on a platter, a helping of as much self-government as was considered good for them and not too much for us to concede. Of course this idea was never expressed in so many words, but it was present at the back of all our minds, and it destroyed the spirit of goodwill that had permeated the earlier session. This change was still further marked during the later sittings, held after the General Election had taken place, at which the Labour Party had been soundly defeated, and Benn and I had both lost our seats.

Nevertheless, we did have a number of interesting discussions and many speeches were made, including one by myself on November 24 on the transference of financial responsibility. But the Conference arrived at no new final conclusions as to federal structure and it solved no basic problems, either between Britain and India, or between different Parties in India itself. When MacDonald, in winding up the plenary Conference on December 1, discoursed on the result of its activities, Mr Gandhi said he had looked earnestly but in vain for the basis of an agreed settlement, and MacDonald himself expressed privately to my wife and myself his regret that he had been prevented from making a further advance. Subsequently, when the India Act was carried through Parliament, its reception in India reflected this fundamental lack of agreement.

After the rising of the Round Table Conference, Emmeline and I went abroad, revisiting Austria and Hungary. Later we went to Majorca, and fell in love with its almond trees and orange groves, its hills and villages, its blue sky and exquisite glimpses of the sea. We admired, too, the independent spirit of its peasantry. On our way back we spent two days at Barcelona and looked down on this flourishing Catalan city from the heights of Tibi Dabo. After returning to England I began to think about getting back into Parliament. I decided not to remain a prospective candidate for West Leicester, but I did not for some time get suited with another constituency.

In the early summer I was invited by the New Fabian Research Bureau to form one of a small party going to Russia to carry out a general investigation into conditions in that country. I readily agreed, and the subject of finance was allotted to me. Going to Russia was still regarded, in 1932, as something of an adventure, and there were a number of formalities to be gone through, but at last everything was fixed up by Intourist (the Russian Travel Agency), and we paid over a cheque to cover, not merely our board and lodging and entertainment during our stay, but also the special facilities that we required for carrying out our investigations.

We had our first experience of the Russian way of life on the boat that sailed direct from London Bridge *via* the Kiel Canal to Leningrad. The discipline of the crew, the service of the meals, the behaviour of the staff, all reflected a different mode of life from that in capitalist countries. The wireless operator was a woman, and there were women sailors among the crew. The ship's doctor was a keen chess-player, and he and I had several games and on balance ended up about level.

The voyage was calm and uneventful, and I spent a good deal of my time on board in trying to add to my acquaintance with the Russian language, in which I had taken lessons before I left home. Alas, I never learnt enough to be of any real use to me, either on the voyage or in the country on my arrival.

We came into the harbour at Leningrad very late at night, and early next morning we went ashore. The formalities of admission into the Soviet Union constituted almost a mystic rite, and reminded me of Sutton Vane's remarkable play *Outward Bound*. We were all herded together in a great waiting room. One by one the names of my companions were called, and they passed out through a little door at the extreme end of the room and did not come back. At last my turn came, and I wondered what was going to happen. In fact, I was greeted by a very efficient young woman, who, addressing me in perfect English, told me that I and my colleagues would be in her charge during our stay in Leningrad. My baggage was examined, my passport, which I had not seen since a week before I left London, was handed back to me, and I was taken to a motor car in which I was driven to the Oktober Hotel, where I was to share a room with Hugh Dalton.

The ordinary British visitor to Russia in those days was content to devote his week or two in the country to general sight-seeing, for him the normal services of Intourist were quite adequate. But our party had come for the express purpose of making certain investigations, and we required special facilities to enable us to carry them out. We were accordingly taken to "Voks", the bureau where the cultural needs of visitors were catered for. All our wishes were duly noted and later punctiliously fulfilled, I was given opportunities to meet all the financial authorities whom I desired to interview and my colleagues, several of whom were architects and engineers, were shown examples of Soviet construction which, at their special request, were not confined to those which were a hundred per cent successful. While all these were being arranged, we had a day of pure sight seeing, which included the famous Hermitage, on whose art treasures our lady guide was evidently an expert, and the so-called 'anti-God' museum, which I found to consist, for the most part, of an exposure of the malpractices of the Russian Church under the Czars.

Real business began for me next day, when I spent a couple of hours with the financial head of the province of Leningrad. Intourist had provided me with a special interpreter, who was acquainted with financial and economic terms, and I had a most interesting and illuminating time, for though the financier did not know English, he certainly understood his own job, and gave me a most lucid exposition. I took lunch with the British Minister, who made me realize the peculiar state of boycott in which he, as a representative of a foreign country, was kept. Any attempts at personal contact with Russians were promptly nipped in the bud, no doubt at the instigation of the Soviet Government. From what I have been told since, this would appear to have been a common experience of British representatives in Russia, and it was one of the less pleasing sides of its totalitarian regime. I suppose the defence of it would be that it was necessary to protect the young growth of an entirely new economic and social system from the contamination of old-world

and reactionary ways of life and thought. Be that as it may, it undoubtedly made intercourse between the peoples of the two countries artificially difficult.

After two days in Leningrad, we went on by night train to Moscow. There, Voks arranged interviews for me with Greenko, the Finance Commissar (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Smilga, the acting head of the Planning system, Ossinsky, the head of the Statistical Department, and Arcus, who was what we should call Governor of the Bank of Russia. As Arcus did not speak much English, Molotov acted as interpreter for us, and, as may be imagined, contributed many valuable points of his own. After two hours of engrossing discussion, I was taken down to see the vaults of the Bank, in which were great sacks of gold coins, and also the Crown Jewels, including the famous crown of the Czars, with its enormous diamond which I was told was alone worth over a million pounds.

Of course I went to the great park of 'culture and rest', a real people's park where all sorts of games, including chess, were indulged in. An important feature was the nursery, where for a small payment parents could leave their children to be looked after while they enjoyed themselves free of care. I was much amused at the monster figures that I saw at different places in the park. Some of these were caricatures of world statesmen, among whom were Ramsay MacDonald and the Archbishop of Canterbury, others portrayed Russian workmen who had turned up late for work, because they had got drunk the night before, or who had misbehaved themselves in various ways. The names of real men were attached to these exhibits, which became therefore part of their punishment.

Both Moscow and Leningrad struck me as very fine cities, but at the time I was there they were struggling desperately to cope with the immense influx of population, which, I was told, amounted in each of them to over a million since the revolution. Many of their principal streets were undergoing repair and nearly all the shops were closed, with the exception of a few selling food, where there were queues such as we have been having in war-time, and one or two in which some inferior secondhand goods were exposed for sale at preposterous prices. The precise significance of all this in the general Soviet economy I will presently explain.

From Moscow I went to the famous city of Nijni Novgorod (now Gorki) and, joining a party of American professors, travelled for four days and nights down the Volga, on a river steamer, to Stalingrad, not far from the Caspian Sea. These boats are the main means of transport for the riparian population, and there were four classes of accommodation for passengers. The lowest-class passengers were huddled together below decks, and lay down to sleep at night among their baggage and animals. On the way down, we passed many enormous rafts of timber being floated down to the sea. As the boat passed under a bridge all passengers were sent below, presumably to prevent any possible act of sabotage. Stalingrad presented signs of Asiatic civilization, but at Rostov-on-Don I found a flourishing modern Ukrainian city.

From Rostov I made two most interesting excursions. The first was to a prison settlement a few miles out of the city. There, modern

theories of penology were being put into practice. The prisoners worked the farm lands with scarcely more supervision than in ordinary free civil life. There were no prison walls and few wardens, sometimes, even, the prisoners were sent alone to a neighbouring town, with a wagon and horses, to buy and bring back stores for the settlement. They told me that the number of attempted escapes were very few. My other visit was to Verblud, an immense State farm extending over several hundred square miles, where modern machinery of all kinds was in use. Unfortunately our time there was greatly limited as we got stuck in the mud on the way. After leaving Rostov I went to Kiev, a city that I greatly admired, and next day I travelled to the Polish frontier and so out of Russia to Warsaw and back to England.

There were three features of the Soviet economy, at the time I was there, which differentiated it from that which prevailed elsewhere. In the first place it was totalitarian to a far greater extent even than was the case in *Fascist Italy* or subsequently in *Nazi Germany*. All urban enterprise and trade, except for a minute amount of petty huckstering, were in the hands of the State, which controlled and owned them. There was no private capital, and no employment of labour by individuals for their own profit. In the country, the landlord and the big farmer had been 'liquidated', and there were large scale State farms. But a certain amount of agriculture was still carried on by peasants owning their own land, though they were being encouraged to work together in co-operative undertakings where modern machinery could be employed.

Secondly, there was nothing corresponding to what economists call 'market overt'. That is to say there was no definite and established price attaching to any article for sale. It would all depend on who was the purchaser and where he was allowed to buy it. Thus a teapot might be sold in a workers' co-operative for one or two roubles, and be priced at 50 to 100 roubles in an open shop. Similar variations applied to such articles of common consumption as a loaf of bread, a pound of tea, a pair of boots, or a suit of clothes. Moreover, the cost of living in one town, to which the Government wished to attract labour, might be only half that in another which was overpopulated. In the main, prices of consumers' goods were regulated so that a wage of 70 to 100 roubles a month just sufficed to obtain the bare necessities of life, but each successive 100 roubles above that brought a rapidly diminishing return.

The price of machinery and of other capital goods was probably more stable, but as sales of such articles were only between one State enterprise and another, the question was in essence one of a book-keeping nature\*. I was told that originally it had been thought unnecessary to attach any money values to such transactions, or to keep books to record them, but that this had led to carelessness and failure, the responsibility for which could not be brought home to any individual. It had had, therefore, to be abandoned. Now each State enterprise stood on its own economic and financial basis and was designated a 'trust', though of

\* The situation may be compared with that of a man in England who runs a farm and a business, and who credits the farm accounts for what he buys from it for his business.

course in common with others it was State property. When it came to foreign trade, an entirely different set of considerations determined price, whatever the nominal exchange value of the rouble, and whatever the cost of production at home, the Government could always undercut the world price in its exports, if it suited its general purpose to do so.

The third fact was that Russia, in addition to all its other changes, was in the throes of an industrial revolution in which it was jumping straight from the small unit of the eighteenth century to the mass production of the twentieth. Two things were necessary to accomplish this transition—first a long term plan, and secondly compulsory abstinence of the population from all unnecessary expenditure. My Russian hosts explained to me meticulously how both of these were accomplished. The plan originated at the centre as a tentative scheme, it was then pushed out, stage by stage, until it reached the circumference—the workman in the factory. At each stage it was discussed and criticized. It then came back the way it went, until it reached the centre again, finally, in its amended form it was enacted and then had a binding effect. Abstinence was enforced by means of the machinery of the banks, price-fixing, and shortage of supply of consumers' goods. Thus the balance was always tilted in favour of the production of 'capital' goods, the heavy goods having priority in the first instance. There was some feeling in Russia, when I was there, that this tilting had recently been overdone, and that, combined with bad harvests, it had seriously reduced the standard of life of the people. But the answer of the Government was that there was urgent need to hurry, no one could ever tell how long would be the period of grace before the country and its economic system were the object of foreign aggression. In fact, this period proved to be almost exactly nine years from the time I was there until the Germans invaded Russia in June 1941.

My stay in Russia was far too short to enable me to obtain a comprehensive view of the country as a whole, but I am satisfied that I acquired a real understanding of its financial system. I described this in detail in my chapter in the book subsequently published, by Gollancz, for the New Fabian Research Bureau, entitled *Twelve Studies in Soviet Russia*. I formed a very high opinion of the way in which planning was being carried out, and I was immensely struck by the extent to which Soviet economy was providing resources for capital development. I reckoned that these were comparable with what was being done throughout the whole of the British Empire.

For the rest, I formed the impression that the Bolshevik Government had come to stay, and that, while the peasantry had not taken kindly to collectivization, the bulk of the urban workers were fired with enthusiasm for the new order, and accepted such privations as it imposed upon them with a good grace. The claim to have abolished class distinctions I found only partially justified. While in theory it might be true, in practice there remained great differences in purchasing power, and therefore in mode of life, between different sections of the population. Nevertheless the change in the status of the worker was of fundamental significance.

I had no wish to see Russian institutions transplanted bodily to my own country, and I thought the general standard of life of the Russian

workman, at the time I was there, substantially below that of his corresponding number in England. But I saw much to admire during my visit, and I recognized that there was an immense amount that we could learn from it to our own advantage

## CHAPTER XVIII

### WORLD PERSPECTIVES

A visit to Spain—Devaluation of American dollar—Hitler in power—The Dimitroff Committee—Egypt—Palestine—Jew and Arab—The Emir of Transjordan—Damascus—Athens and the Parthenon—Turkey—Ataturk's reforms—A conference of women

IN the winter of 1932-33 Emmeline and I paid another visit to Majorca. From there we went to Spain and travelled through some of the majestic scenery of the southern part of the country. Places such as Granada, Malaga, Algeciras, Cordova, Seville, and Cadiz, which had until then been only names on a map, became to us living realities. Not only were we impressed with their architectural treasures, but we were also struck with the cleanliness of the cities and the kindness of the people. We were told that many Spaniards now preferred football matches to bullfights and that the latter were in part kept going by the high-priced tickets sold to foreign visitors, including (to our shame) English tourists, who were curious to see this cruel sport, forbidden in their own countries. We wound up our trip at the famous and mighty Rock of Gibraltar. Little did we suspect that, before many months had passed, Spain would be rent by civil war, which would mutilate its architectural treasures and bring great suffering on her people, or that a few years later in the second World War Gibraltar would no longer assure to Britain undisputed control over the western entrance to the Mediterranean.

While we were in Spain we learnt that the United States had abandoned the gold standard. There was no question in her case of inability to pay out gold on demand. The vaults of her banks were stuffed with it. But the continuous fall in prices had wrought havoc with her industrial life, and her unemployed were estimated at some twelve million men and women. When it came to the point that her whole financial, economic, and social structure was threatened with collapse, Franklin Roosevelt, the newly elected President, took action and devalued the dollar. He proceeded to take powers to control (1) the banks, (2) the currency, (3) the creation of credit, and (4) the promotion of public works. He declared it to be his intention to raise dollar prices and, in co-operation with other nations, to stabilize them on a new level.

This catastrophic event was naturally of supreme interest to me. More than a year previously I had, at the invitation of my friend Raymond Gram Swing, given a broadcast talk to America on "How England Gets on Without Gold". In this, my first experience of the microphone, I had explained the need for all nations to reach a stable standard of value, which I had defined as the price of a fixed basketful of goods. In the spring of 1932 I had strongly approved of the British decision to

create the Exchange Equalization Account and to put it under the control, not of the Bank of England, but of the Government. I had further developed my ideas in a book\* which attempted to give precision to resolutions, carried almost simultaneously by conferences of the Labour Party and the Conservative Party in October 1932, in favour of stabilizing the general level of prices.

The fact that President Roosevelt's decision, like that of the British Government in 1931, was forced on him by events made it all the more important. It marked a new stage in weaning countries away from dependence on gold, and ushered in a new era of managed currencies. I accepted an invitation to address a small meeting of the House of Commons on the subject, and I also took part in a special inquiry on behalf of the Royal Institute of International Affairs under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Addis. From that time onward, the British Treasury developed more and more a policy of its own, separate from, and in some ways antagonistic to, the deflationary line of the Governor of the Bank of England. Prices were kept approximately stable and cheap† money became established as the normal. Except for a short period at the outbreak of war, this policy has persisted right up to the present day.

Meanwhile, in another country also, the industrial depression brought about by falling prices was having disastrous effects. The numbers of the unemployed in Germany had reached the appalling figure of six millions, inflammatory material for a perfervid demagogue to set ablaze. Hitler had no difficulty in persuading a great many Germans that this and their other misfortunes were all attributable to the Jews, the Communists and the Treaty of Versailles. He became Chancellor of the Reich and, after the burning of the Reichstag, assumed absolute power. He instituted the concentration camps and proceeded to inaugurate in Germany the brutalities which have since marked the Nazi rule in all countries where he has had domination.

I was profoundly moved at the stories which reached me of what was taking place. Physical cruelty always affects me deeply, and I was at first inclined to discredit the reports from Germany. But as case after case became authenticated, a black shadow began to creep across my consciousness which has never been lifted to the present day. I had been aware of great wrongs in the world. I had witnessed injustice and oppression of the weak and helpless, but I had up to that time believed that steadily, if slowly, things were getting better, and that never again would the tortures of bygone ages be publicly tolerated. I now learnt with horror that one of the great countries of Europe was going back century by century in civilization, and that atrocities were being committed in cold blood on defenceless men and women, which had had their counterpart only in the darkest days of human history.

At first, Hitler was not inclined unnecessarily to flout world opinion. In fact, in his role of 'defender of the faith' and 'chief bulwark against

\* *The Money Muddle and the Way Out* (Geo. Allen & Unwin.)

† That is to say, low rates of interest.

Bolshevism', he was obtaining support from wealthy reactionaries in the Western democracies. It seemed therefore just possible that carefully worded protests in this country, signed by persons of eminence, might have some influence upon his actions in Germany. I accordingly gathered round me a number of distinguished men and women, drawn from all parties, in what was called the Dimitroff Committee, and we took up individual cases in letters to the Press, and occasionally addressed polite remonstrances to Hitler himself, or to one of his principal subordinates.

I do not think we achieved very much, but one or two of Hitler's victims were released after we had exposed the hollowness of charges against them. In particular Dimitroff, himself a Bulgarian communist after his acquittal in the Reichstag fire trial, was, in spite of threats against him by Goring, allowed to leave the country and go to Russia. From there, he sent me a special telegram, thanking my committee for what we had done in helping to bring about his release. For the rest it soon became apparent that Hitler would go his way without regard to what people thought in other lands, and realizing that the committee had no longer any useful service to perform, I wound it up.

Nevertheless I remained deeply concerned about events in Germany. Their effect inside the Reich was ugly enough. But I saw that they carried, also, a new menace to neighbouring countries, including our own. I had always assumed that a people would refuse to be led into war by its rulers, if a reasonable settlement was clearly offered to them as an alternative. It had seemed impossible that they could be kept in complete ignorance, and that every dissident voice could be suppressed by violent means. Yet this was actually happening in Germany. Accordingly, pacifist as I was, I now began to face up to the need for armed collective security in defence of world civilization. The development of this theme I will reserve for another chapter.

In the winter of 1933-34 Emmeline and I spent several weeks in Egypt. We stayed with Egyptian friends in Alexandria, and in Cairo met the son of our former dragoman of 1905. We revisited Luxor, and were shown the tomb of Tutankhamen in Thebes which had been excavated since we had been there. The granite quarry at Assuan with its huge half-excavated monolith, impressed me profoundly as evidence of the tremendous drive and energy of the ancient ruling caste.

The political situation in Egypt at the time of our visit was not a very happy one. There was conflict between King Fuad and the Wafd, who were the popular party. The British were blamed for refusing to withdraw from Egypt, and for permitting the King to govern unconstitutionally. I made contact with Nahas Pasha and other Wafd leaders, and with the widow of Zagloul, and came to the conclusion that they were ready to accept a reasonable settlement with the British, which would even include the vexed questions of the Canal and the Sudan. Subsequently I had a long talk at the British Residency and was happy to find there an equally accommodating attitude, which a short time later eventuated in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty. This has given satisfaction to both sides and has recently stood the exacting test of war.



After leaving Egypt, we paid a short visit to Palestine, and returned there for a longer stay in the following year (1935). We spent most of our time in Jerusalem, but we also visited the other sacred places and traversed the whole country from Hebron to Haifa and the Sea of Galilee. We went down to Jericho and the Dead Sea. We crossed over into Transjordan. After the rains, we saw the desert literally blossoming like the rose, with gay flowers coming up all over it. The country itself enchanted us, and everywhere we found, amid the relics of its many histories, modern problems of absorbing interest.

We were shown many examples of the marvellous work done by the Jews in reclaiming the land and increasing the fertility of the soil. Neither high scientific research nor hard physical labour had been lacking, moreover, at Haifa and elsewhere, they had faced the perils of disease in draining the swamps. As a result, they had brought prosperity to their settlements in various parts of the country, they had built up the cultivation of the citrus crop on a commercial scale, and they had added enormously to the revenues of Palestine.

Even more interesting to a student of politics were their cultural experiments. In the cities of Haifa and Tel Aviv they had laid the foundations of health and social services. Several of their settlements in the country were on a communal basis. At the time of our first visit in 1934 some of these had already been in existence long enough to include grown up members of the second generation, and they appeared to have got past the difficult stage in communal life. When we went back in 1935 we found the problem had been greatly aggravated by the coming of large numbers of refugees from Germany, some of whom lacked the outlook of the original settlers. Heroic efforts were being made, however, to extend to them the full amenities of communal life.

One day we drove out to lunch with Dr Weizman, the enlightened Jewish protagonist, and were shown over his famous institute and laboratory. After lunch I plied him with searching questions on the political side of the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. His full replies convinced me that there was a strong *prima facie* case for the Jewish demands. We were happy also to make the acquaintance of Dr Magnes, the president of the Hebrew University, and of Mr Joshua Gordon, of the Jewish Agency, both of whom impressed us by the breadth of their outlook.

At the same time we took every opportunity that presented itself of informing ourselves of Arab opinion. Moderate men, such as the Mayor of Jerusalem and the Governor of the District of Bethlehem, put their case against the unlimited intrusion on their ancient civilization of Jewish life and thought. The Mufti, on the other hand, put the extreme case. He wanted to emigrate all the Jews who had come into Palestine since the war. I spent two hours with him one evening in an upper chamber inside the city of Jerusalem while he expounded his view. Our absorbing conversation was frequently broken in upon by the ringing of the telephone to inquire whether the new moon had yet been seen in Egypt, which would be the signal for Ramadan, the month of fast, to be brought to an end.

We found much to admire in the way that the civil services were being administered. Finance, health, prisons, education, were in

competent hands, but not much had been done for labour. We enjoyed on several occasions the hospitality of Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wauchope, the High Commissioner, and were apprised of his valiant efforts to induce Jew and Arab to settle down together in common citizenship. At the time of our visits there seemed a reasonable chance that his conciliatory policy might be crowned with success, though even then there were many critical observers who took a less hopeful view. Unfortunately the disorders which broke out later fully justified their forebodings.

In Transjordan the situation was quite different, for there had been no Jewish immigration into that country. The difficulty, there, was to secure enough revenues to conduct the services of the State. We dined with the ruler, the Emir Abdullah, and at his request I discussed with him some of the financial questions uppermost in Britain. His wide outlook and progressive views have since proved of great value in helping to resolve racial problems.

One day the Governor of Bethlehem took us to an Arab village, where we found the inhabitants assembled to meet him. He explained to us that he was arranging for the final settlement of a dispute of long standing. Twenty years before, a man from this village had gone to America and, as a result of a quarrel, had murdered a man coming from an adjacent village in Palestine. Shortly afterwards the murderer was himself killed in a street accident. This did not end the matter as it would have done in England. From that time onward there had been a feud between the men of the two villages in Palestine. Whenever they met in Jerusalem or elsewhere there was physical conflict. At last it had been decided by the village to which the murderer had belonged to offer reparation. The amount had been adjudicated on, and agreed. The villagers would take the money to the neighbouring village and tender it. They would also take food, which would be cooked by the other village. They would then all sit round together and eat it, and the dispute would be at an end.

On another occasion we were sitting in the house of some British friends in Transjordan, when an Arab man and girl came in, in a state of great excitement. Their little brother, a child of six, had, in a quarrel over a game of football, thrown a stone at another boy, which by mischance had hit him behind the ear and killed him outright. The child had been taken before a Court, which had discharged him owing to his tender years. But Arab sentiment was not thereby satisfied. Our visitors said that they were being constantly molested in the marketplace and elsewhere by the relatives of the dead boy, and that this would go on unless they could find the sum of £100, which a Moslem Court had fixed as the equitable reparation. They had sold up everything they possessed, but had only got together £50. What were they to do? If I remember rightly, the sequel was that the Court was induced to make some reduction in the penalty, and that the balance required was subscribed by friends.

These incidents gave point to a conversation I had with a learned Jewish Rabbi, Dr Levine. He explained that the Mosaic law, 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth', which is commonly quoted by Christians as a law of savage vengeance, was in reality something quite different.

It was a law to *limit* penalties. A powerful family or community must not use its strength and influence to demand unconscionable reparation. There was to be an eye penalty for the loss of an eye, and a tooth penalty for the loss of a tooth, and these amounts must not be exceeded. Its nearest modern British equivalent is probably the law of workmen's compensation.

We said good-bye to Palestine with regret, and drove up by car into Syria. Damascus, with its abundant water, was a delight after the parched land from which we had come, and recalled to us the story of Naaman, the Syrian leper, who indignantly contrasted the many fine rivers of his native land with the tiny Jordan. We walked along the 'street called straight' and entered the famous mosques of the city. From Damascus we went to Baalbek, and saw the wonderful Roman remains. Driving across Lebanon we came down into Beirut and embarked for Europe.

We had intended to spend a fortnight in Greece, but had been prevented by the outbreak of a short-lived revolution. However, it ended in time for us to have one unforgettable day at Athens and, in the course of it, to visit the Parthenon. I am, unfortunately, one of those who find that reality does not generally come up to the full expectation aroused by the glowing descriptions of others. But in the case of the Parthenon, as in that of the Taj at Agra, nothing that I had read in advance detracted in the least from my appreciation of its completely satisfying loveliness. Perfect in design and exquisite in setting it will remain with me always a beautiful and indelible memory.

From Athens we proceeded through the Bosphorus and past the Dardenelles to Istanbul, where there was to be an international conference of women. While my wife was taking part in the preliminary sessions I crossed the Bosphorus and went by train to Ankara. I found it in process of transformation from an upland village into the new capital of Turkey. Around the base of the little citadel, with its steep and narrow streets, was being laid out a modern city of wide thoroughfares, stately public buildings, and pleasant private residences.

This change of capital was only one visible evidence of the startling innovations made by Ataturk. This dictator had not been content, as many other revolutionaries have been, to make a few spectacular changes in political and economic structure, he had struck deep at the roots of Turkish cultural life. He had remodelled the language and its calligraphy, he had changed the national dress, he had reorientated the basis of religious allegiance. Perhaps most surprising of all, he had altered the whole status of women. Only ten short years before they had been in the harem. Now they were walking about the streets in European clothes, entering the mosques, becoming Members of Parliament, taking part in conference discussions, and dining with us at the public banquets. "We feel no embarrassment," one of them said to my wife, "because we know that in doing all this we are supported by the Government."

I asked a Turkish Minister once how it was that Ataturk had been able to accomplish so much without encountering fierce opposition. His answer was illuminating. For centuries, he said, Turkey had

remained inviolate and had controlled an empire. It was therefore an immense shock to her people when her soil was overrun by a foreign army in the war of 1914-18. This had aroused them to a consciousness that their culture was out of date, and to a passionate determination to bring it into line with modern thought. Ataturk's decisions were therefore in the nature of a match which sets alight material ready for combustion.

It was, I believe, at his express invitation that the international conference of women was held in Istanbul, and he took a personal interest in it. He got out a special postage stamp issue in commemoration of it, imprinting on the stamps of different denominations the likenesses of distinguished women. He placed one of his palaces at their disposal for the sessions, and at the close he invited the leaders to pay him a visit at Ankara, and saw to it that they incurred no expense in accepting his invitation.

The conference itself was a marked success, and gave to Emmeline and myself an added sense of pride in the part we had played, a quarter of a century before, in the resurgence of women. It demonstrated once more the essential unity of women, the world over, and the fact of their common interest in the preservation of peace and the mutual co-operation of mankind.

## CHAPTER XIX

### EDINBURGH M P

Invitation to East Edinburgh—European situation—The peace ballot—1935 election—A Government pledge—Result of the poll—Abyssinia—The Hoare Laval treaty—Words of Euripides—Conservative psychology—A defence of collective security—Equal pay—Neville Chamberlain's Budgets—Death of George V—The Civil List—Privy Councillor—A new Prime Minister

THE city of Edinburgh has always had a special attraction for me. On the many occasions throughout my life when I have visited it, on various errands, it has always given me delight. I know of no street in the world, except perhaps that alongside the Danube in Buda Pest, which has the grandeur of Princes Street, while, for a combination of natural beauty and historic romance, the ancient capital of Scotland stands pre-eminent. I count it therefore as exceptional good fortune that it has fallen to my lot to be one of its representatives in Parliament, and to have its generous and cultured citizens as my constituents.

I remember well the day in the autumn of 1933 when, directed by Transport House, I presented myself in Edinburgh and was met at the station by the secretary of the East Edinburgh Labour Party, William Davie, and by George Rhind, a prominent local Councillor. Not a word about politics did they say to me until they had first taken me to the City Chambers, and then to the Burns and Scott Museum in the Canon gate. I think they wanted to satisfy themselves that I had the proper sense of reverence for Scottish holy things before they trusted me, as an Englishman, to be a candidate for a Scottish seat. I must have passed

the test, for by the end of the day they had not only undertaken to recommend me to the selection committee for adoption, but had become my close personal friends. William Davie remains to guide the Party and to give me his trusted advice, but the good Councillor, whom I learnt to love no less for his quiet humour than for his unfailing devotion to his fellows, has since passed away.

At that time, clouds had already begun to gather on the international horizon. Japan had invaded Manchuria and been adjudged guilty of a breach of the Covenant, by a special committee of investigation set up by the League of Nations and presided over by Lord Lytton. The British 'National' Government had not only done nothing about it, but had put up Sir John Simon at Geneva to expound the case for Japan. In Germany, Hitler, now firmly established in power, had started re-arming, but to what extent nobody seemed to know, though it was whispered that many influential people were deliberately blind because they wanted him to be a bulwark against Bolshevism. In Italy, Mussolini was already making preparations for his nefarious raid on Abyssinia, a country which had only recently been brought into the League at the express invitation of Italy herself.

Inside the Labour Party these foreign events were beginning to create a division of opinion. Up to then, it had seemed possible to ride at once the two horses of pure pacifism and loyalty to the League. But now it had become apparent that the time might come when they would take us in opposite directions. Loyalty to the League meant support of collective security and a willingness, if need arose, to co-operate in the application of sanctions. If there was actual aggression, that might involve us in war. It was therefore necessary for the members of the Labour Party, individually and collectively, to choose which horse, in that event, they would continue to ride.

I did not arrive at my own personal conclusion without great searchings of heart. War was to me a hideous evil both in itself and in its repercussions. It not only brought immediate ruin, but it rarely achieved any lasting settlement. It aroused many of the ugliest of human passions. I was under no illusion that a war waged on behalf of the League would materially differ from any other war, either in its conduct or in its results. My whole being revolted against being instrumental in sending other men to their doom, and in depriving women of their husbands, children of their fathers, and mothers of their sons. I foresaw, also, that the war of the future would be fought largely in the air, and that on both sides civilians of all ages would suffer mutilation and death.

But I was compelled at the same time to face up to the other alternative. If we were not prepared to take part in war on behalf of the liberties of other nations of the League, or in defence of public right, were we prepared to have our own country overrun, our own liberties destroyed and to allow a foreign domination to be established in our midst? I had never taken up that attitude, not even when I was a conscientious objector in 1918 and it was not an attitude that I could support now. I had no faith in passive resistance as a means of warding off aggression. I knew that men and nations would fight to preserve their freedom and that I myself would rather die than lose it. If, therefore, the way to preserve freedom was to join together to organize

resistance, I saw that our country ought to be prepared to take its part in the common effort

In the summer of 1934 the League of Nations organized a 'peace ballot', which took the form of a voluntary referendum of the British electorate on certain matters of League policy. One question related to disarmament and presented no difficulty to me, I was in favour of that on a mutual but not on a unilateral basis. Another dealt with collective security. We were asked to say whether we were prepared to support it by (1) economic and (2), if necessary, by military means. This raised the whole issue which I had been debating in my mind. In the end, I voted 'yes' to both parts of the question. Most members of the Labour Party did the same, and, collectively, the Party at its annual conference, with full realization of its new significance, reaffirmed its support of collective security. But a few members including some of my personal friends, took a different line and George Lansbury, who had been leading the Party in Parliament, resigned his position after the vote was taken.

In the country as a whole, out of eleven and a half million persons of all parties who returned answers to the questions of the peace ballot, no fewer than ten and a half millions were in favour of multilateral disarmament and nearly seven millions supported collective security with all its implications. These figures had a profound effect upon Mr Baldwin the Prime Minister, and upon the members of his Government. Up to that time they had been 'back-peddalling' on the League of Nations and disparaging the conception of collective security. Several of them had advised Conservatives throughout the country to have nothing to do with the ballot. Now they decided to modify their attitude. At Geneva on September 11, 1935, Sir Samuel Hoare, the Foreign Secretary, went so far as to use these words:

"The ideas enshrined in the Covenant have become a part of our national conscience. My country stands for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of aggression."

In the minds of his hearers there was no doubt that these words, which were received with great enthusiasm, had special reference to the campaign which Mussolini was already commencing against Abyssinia. They meant that the British Government was prepared to throw the whole weight of the British Empire, in common with that of other members of the League, against this act of aggression, and they were so interpreted in this country. This view was reinforced when, at the opening of the General Election, the Government made a declaration in favour of collective security, and Government candidates, following this lead, included it in their individual programmes.

In East Edinburgh there was a triangular contest. The sitting member was a Liberal, Mr D. M. Mason, who had in 1931, with the help of Conservative votes, ousted my friend Drummond Shiels from the seat. But in Parliament he had in several ways alienated Tory support. He was also a strong supporter of a return to the gold standard. The Conservative candidate was a woman, Miss Cowan, who was well known locally. I was greatly struck by the good spirit with which the election

was conducted. The Women Citizens Association invited us to a joint meeting, in which to state our respective cases, and it gave me a rousing welcome and a splendid hearing. In several of the big factories I was allowed to address the men and women inside the works.

My principal support came from the fishing village of Musselburgh, which, though included in the constituency of East Edinburgh, lies outside the city boundaries and has a separate burgh council of its own. But I also had loyal friends in Portobello, Craighentunny, Restalrig, and in the Canongate. In the latter, electioneering took the quaint form of going in succession into the various 'closes', ringing a dinner-bell, and giving a short speech to the women who looked down upon me from the thrown-open windows of the upper floors. Emmeline had an enthusiastic reception on her arrival in the constituency, and her sister, May Pethick, did yeoman service in the committee rooms, while several of my friends came up specially to assist me in indispensable ways.

It was not, however, until the last few days that the fight became keen. By that time the municipal elections were over and their results celebrated, the broadcast speeches of the party leaders had been delivered, and the literature of the candidates had gone round the constituency. In my election address, I stood by the whole programme of the Labour Party, including, in particular, collective security, multilateral disarmament, the planning of industrial life so as to end the tragedy of poverty in the midst of potential plenty, and the abolition of the means test.

Polling was on November 14, and the result, declared next day, was fairly close. I secured 13,341 votes to Miss Cowan's 12,229 and Mr Mason's 5,313. On the announcement of the figures my supporters carried me in triumph shoulder high through the crowd. Shortly after the poll, Mr Mason gave it out as his opinion that there was no real future for Liberals except within the ranks of the Labour Party. In the country as a whole, the Government retained power with another huge majority, but Labour secured 154 seats in the new House of Commons.

Within four weeks Parliament had met, the usual formalities had been gone through, I had been elected to the Labour Executive, the King's Speech had been read, and the 'debate on the Address' had proceeded nearly to its close. Suddenly, on December 10, there appeared in the Press what purported to be the terms of an agreement between the British Foreign Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare, and the French Minister, Pierre Laval, for a proposed settlement of the Abyssinian question which, it was said, the Emperor had been advised to accept. They were of a devastating character. More than half the territory of the country was to be handed over to Italian control and the rest was to be subjected to the 'assistance of the League'. Consternation prevailed among all parties in the House of Commons, and the Labour Opposition decided to raise the matter forthwith. Lees Smith opened the case and I wound up, being sandwiched in between Mr Eden and the Prime Minister.

There had been some suggestion that the terms, as disclosed in the Press, were not authentic, but I was able to show from the speech of the Government spokesman that there could be no substantial inaccuracy. I stripped the proposals of the camouflage of a give-and-take agreement, and characterized them as a triumph for aggression and a setback for the

League I reminded the House of Sir Samuel Hoare's speech at Geneva on September 11, and of a further speech of his on October 22 in which he had said, "We cannot condone the multiple breach of treaties and let the League survive" I called on the Prime Minister to live up to his professions at the General Election, and even at this twelfth hour to repudiate the settlement, and I warned him that if he failed to do so he would damage British prestige and destroy all confidence in the word of British statesmen. Such a course, I said, would 'usher in a future so threatening and so black that none of us can contemplate it without horror and dismay'.

Mr Baldwin was obviously moved by the attitude of the House, and though he defended the action of the Government that evening, he yielded to a certain extent later on. The Foreign Secretary resigned, and Anthony Eden took his place. The 'Hoare-Laval' peace terms were not further pressed, and certain economic 'sanctions' were imposed against Italy. More than 50 nations of the League co-operated in such action under the leadership of Britain. But, as time went on, it became increasingly apparent that Mussolini was not being seriously impeded. The one sanction that, apart from military action, might have stopped his aggression, namely, a joint refusal to sell him petrol for his aeroplanes, was not applied. In the end, Mussolini, after employing methods of great barbarity, won his war, and the British Government, though for a time it refused to recognize the conquest, remained on friendly terms with the aggressor.

While the war was still in progress, I remember well one evening when I was sitting in the Chamber of the House of Commons listening to a speech by a Cabinet Minister. He had just proved conclusively to his own satisfaction why it was impossible for the Government to take any really effective step to stop Mussolini. Suddenly I found ringing in my head the words of the Greek play, *Medea*, written by Euripides over 2000 years ago. "Now I have no more hope of the children living." In the drama, Medea has just sent her children on an errand, the end of which the Chorus realizes can only be their death. I was startled to discover that subconsciously I had reached a similar conclusion with regard to the European children of the present day. Mussolini was going to be allowed to win. The League of Nations would be broken up. Europe would have another war. Her sons would be called on to fight, and millions of them would be killed.

Future generations will, I am convinced, have the greatest difficulty in understanding why, in this crisis, the British Government behaved as it did. There could not have been imagined a case of aggression more unquestionable than the unprovoked attack by Italy on Abyssinia. The League of Nations was in no two minds as to the merits. Its combined forces were amply strong enough to compel the submission of Mussolini. It was in the clear interests of the British Empire to gather round it the largest possible measure of world support for resistance to territorial conquest. Yet Mussolini was allowed almost unimpeded to achieve his ends, and thereby to strike a blow at the League from which it never recovered.

In the House of Commons, in public debate, and in the lobbies and smoking rooms and other places where Members forgather, various



justifications were put forward for the Government's attitude. It was whispered that in December 1935 our ships in the Mediterranean were not provided with any defence weapons against a possible sudden attack by Italian aeroplanes. It was argued that it was necessary to keep in step with France, and that M Laval had made it plain that he was not prepared to take any action which would upset Mussolini. It was pointed out that, owing to their geographical situation, most of the other members of the League could render little assistance to the common cause. It was alleged that the United States would have refused to join in any embargo on oil supplies to Italy.

Whatever truth there may have been in any or all of these explanations, it seems to me self-evident that the Government, if it had been composed of resolute men, determined to organize and enforce the rule of law of the League, could and would have found adequate means to overcome the difficulties. It follows from this that its failure to do so must have sprung from deeper causes. I am satisfied that the simple fact was that neither the Government nor the bulk of the Conservatives in the House really believed in the principles of the League. They regarded it as a new-fangled and somewhat dangerous body whose help they did not require, and which might easily drag them into Quixotic adventures which were much better not undertaken. In their view the British Empire could defend itself. For that its forces existed, and they should be kept solely for that and for the defence of France. For the rest, Sir John Simon made it clear that the Government was not prepared to risk a single ship or man on behalf of Abyssinian independence.

Not all the Conservatives agreed with this point of view, and it was violently opposed by the Labour Party and by most of the Liberals. On July 27, 1936, I was put up to state the Labour case in a debate on foreign affairs. My main contention was that members of the Government were continuing in the twentieth century to think in terms of the nineteenth. The coming of the aeroplane had completely changed the island character of our country and the nature of war. I proceeded

"Unless the policy of the Government is sound, no massed might of our own strength will defend some outlying part of the British Empire, attacked by an aggressor, or even our own shores. Therefore our position today is that we have not merely an academic and platonic need to support public right in the world, but an immediate personal selfish and direct need, because it is only through the support of public right that we can hope to survive in the future. If we fail to support other countries when they are attacked by an aggressor we shall not be able to complain if other countries fail to support us when our turn comes."

I concluded by refusing the appeal of the Foreign Secretary for trust in the Government. I said that we and the country had trusted the Government at the General Election when they professed to stand for collective security. They had betrayed that trust and we were not prepared now to renew it.

All through these years, foreign affairs were a major preoccupation of the House of Commons, but naturally they did not take up the whole

of our attention. In April 1936, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, in the debate on the Civil Service, introduced a motion in favour of giving the same scales of pay to women as to men in the 'common' classes of the service, in which they do identical work and are interchangeable. I supported her in a speech in which I wound up the debate for the Labour Party. When it came to a division, several Conservatives voted in favour of the motion, and the Government suffered defeat by a narrow majority. But Mr Baldwin refused to give way and insisted on having the decision reversed on a vote of confidence.

A little later, in a debate on Dominion Affairs, I myself raised another matter of considerable concern to women—the question of the effect of marriage on their nationality. I reminded the House that during the last war a great deal of feeling had been aroused owing to the fact that many British-born women, who were entirely loyal to their native country, had been treated as aliens because they were married to a foreigner, while many foreign women who had married Britishers (sometimes only formally and for the express purpose) escaped all supervision. After the war, the Government had refused to make any substantial change in the law, alleging as their reason that, if they did so, Britain would be out of step with the Dominions and with foreign countries. But the law had now been altered in U.S.A. and several other places, and I asked that the Government should bring the British code into line. No response was made to my plea.

My position as principal financial spokesman for the Opposition brought me up against Mr Neville Chamberlain, who was at that time, Chancellor of the Exchequer. His Budget speeches presented a striking contrast to those of Mr Winston Churchill. In place of the imaginative flights of his predecessor, there was a precise statement of the position. Mr Chamberlain, in fact, approached this task, as indeed he did that of most political problems, from the standpoint of the plain business man. It was probably for that reason that he so unflinchingly, and as I thought rightly, supported cheap money against any pressure brought upon him in the opposite direction by the Bank of England. In answering criticism, he was rather too fond of making debating points and feigning ignorance so as to trap me into making impromptu explanations which he knew would be too technical for the House of Commons to understand. Towards the end of his tenure of office, when he needed large sums for rearmament, he did not hesitate to unbalance his Budget and borrow the money, and when I reminded him that it was precisely for similar action that he had condemned the Labour Government, he pointed to a meticulous scheme he had prepared for repayment over thirty years. I doubt whether he himself realized how hypothetical this repayment was, in fact, of course, it never began to operate.

King George V died in January 1936 at a time when Parliament was in recess. I was in Torquay and came straight back to London to attend the emergency sittings of the House. A day or two later, M.P.s and Peers all assembled in Westminster Hall to await the royal cortège. Presently the great doors facing Palace Yard were opened, and the bier was brought in. King Edward followed unostentatiously, as was his wont, having marched on foot all the way from the railway station. With him came his brothers, like himself, in civilian clothes. I found the

sheer simplicity of the scene far more moving than any elaborate pomp, and much more in keeping with my own attitude towards death. Next day the general public were admitted, and so long as the lying-in-state continued great crowds came to pay their last tribute, forming a queue which lined up all along Abingdon Street, over Lambeth Bridge, and back on the other side of the river.

After the funeral, Parliament resumed its normal life, but the day came when, according to custom, we were called upon to make financial provision for the new reign, and a Select Committee on the Civil List was set up, of which I and several of my Labour colleagues were made members. During the nineteenth century there had been considerable anti-monarchical feeling, particularly among the radicals of the day. Keir Hardie, without wholly subscribing to this sentiment, had been highly suspicious of Court influence, and critical of the expenditure of so much public money on the royal family while the unemployed and the aged were left unprovided for. But times had changed. The social services had come into being. King George V had been a strictly constitutional monarch and had been punctilious in his dealings with the Labour Party. The new King had, as Prince of Wales, established many friendly contacts with quite humble people. Thus there was in 1936 little trace left of support for republicanism as a form of Government, and still less of any antipathy to the persons of the Royal House. Nevertheless the financial problem remained to be solved, and presented delicate and difficult matters for consideration and adjustment.

The money regulated by the Civil List is paid out of the Exchequer. It provides the privy purse of the sovereign, payments to other members of the royal family, upkeep of the royal palaces, and pensions given in recognition of services to literature, art, and science. It is fixed once and for all at the beginning of each reign, though it may be modified at other times if special circumstances arise. It is interesting to recall that, whereas about a century ago it had stood at over a million pounds and absorbed about 10 per cent of the total annual public revenue, by 1936 it had fallen to well below a million and absorbed only one-tenth of one per cent.

In addition to his emoluments from the Civil List the ruling sovereign has for many centuries enjoyed the income from the Duchy of Lancaster,\* an estate administered by a member of the Government, and the Prince of Wales has similarly enjoyed the income from the Duchy of Cornwall.\* These estates, whose value has been greatly enhanced in recent years, had figured in the debates in the House of Commons on the Civil List at the accession of Edward VII, and again at that of George V, the contention being put forward that the income from them should be merged in the public revenue in the same way as that from the Crown Lands. On both occasions this proposal had been rejected.

Our Select Committee of 1936 made a striking innovation. Seeing that there was no Prince of Wales and that even if one were subsequently to be born it would be many years before he attained his majority, it recommended with the King's consent, that, for the present, the income from the Duchy of Cornwall should, after meeting certain charges, be

\* It must not be inferred from the nomenclature that the properties in question are all situated in the counties which gave their name to the respective estates.

employed in relief of the burden on public funds of the Civil List as a whole. It also increased the money available for the pensions in recognition of services to the arts. In other respects it followed traditional lines. In the House of Commons I spoke in support of these recommendations, which were carried.

After the abdication of Edward VIII and the accession of George VI, I was again a member of the new Select Committee in 1937 on the Civil List. The same plan was adopted with regard to the *Duchy of Cornwall*, but provision was made for Princess Elizabeth and her eventual marriage. In the Committee, and subsequently in the House of Commons, the Labour Party put forward a proposal that an inquiry should take place as to the possibility of simplification of the royal regime. In moving the amendment embodying this proposal I pointed out that our object was not to save a few pounds, but to free the sovereign from excessive convention and to enable him to mingle freely with all his subjects without any artificial barriers of wealth and clothing. I further suggested that Princess Elizabeth should have the same opportunity as her male forbears of completing her education in one of the great Universities. Our amendment was rejected.

During those years I scarcely ever missed a meeting of the Executive of the Parliamentary Labour Party. I regarded this as my most important political work, more so than my speeches in the Chamber or my votes in the division lobby. For in our deliberations we were engaged in forming the policy of the Party and influencing that of the nation itself. As the 'Shadow Cabinet', we were informed in advance of many Government decisions and we were sometimes consulted before decisions were taken. I recall, in particular, one occasion when the Government had in contemplation a constitutional proposal, cutting across Party lines, and we were asked our view with regard to it. We expressed our dislike of the method which the Government were proposing, and suggested an entirely different solution of the difficulty. In the result, it was our scheme that the Government introduced to the House and carried into law.

On the occasion of the King's coronation I was made a member of the Privy Council. This body is part of the ancient constitution of the country, and is nominally, under the sovereign, the ultimate seat of both executive and judicial authority. In practice it has delegated these functions to two subcommittees of itself. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council is the final Court of Appeal on constitutional questions. The Cabinet is the subcommittee which exercises executive power, and it follows as a corollary that every member of the Cabinet must first be a member of the Privy Council. Privy Councillors who are not members of either of these committees have no special duties to perform, but if they are also Members of Parliament they have certain rights of priority in the House of Commons. Apart from this, as they are all sworn to secrecy on admission, they form in a sense a fraternity of elder statesmen who may be informed and consulted on matters of high policy. I regard it as a great privilege to belong to this body.

The new reign saw also a new Prime Minister. After the coronation, Mr. Baldwin carried out his intention of relinquishing this office, which he had held with intervals ever since the retirement of Mr. Bonar Law in

## CHAPTER XX

### THE WORLD IN ARMS

The Spanish war—Non intervention—Government policy—Resignation of Anthony Eden—Invasion of Austria—A speech on national unity—Czecho-Slovakia—Berchtesgaden and Munich—Chamberlain's reactions—Conscription—A flight to Geneva—The outbreak of hostilities—The phoney war—Resignation of Chamberlain—The Coalition—Lees Smith is Chairman—The household means test—Public Accounts Committee—Leader of the Opposition—The Battle of Britain—New allies—The world after the war

THE Spanish civil war followed close on the conquest of Abyssinia by Mussolini and led up to Hitler's attack on the countries of Europe. It formed, in fact, one link in a chain of world events, and there is little doubt, in my mind, that it was so regarded and so intended by the Axis Powers. But there is no indication that either Mr Baldwin, who was Prime Minister at its outbreak, or Mr Chamberlain, who shortly afterwards succeeded him, saw in it anything other than an isolated phenomenon of merely local significance.

It has always seemed to me that only four consistent courses of action were open to them in dealing with it. They could have espoused the cause of the constitutionally elected Government of Spain and helped it to suppress the internal rebellion and beat off the invasion of the Moors. Even if they had themselves favoured this course I do not imagine that their Conservative followers, whose sympathies were mainly with Franco, would have allowed them to pursue it. Secondly, they could have openly supported the rebels but this would have outraged British popular feeling. Thirdly, they could have insisted that the Spaniards should be left to fight it out among themselves without outside intervention, and kept the ring to see that this was the case. Lastly, they could have declared their intention to remain entirely aloof from the struggle and to allow any other Power to take what action it liked without British interference.

The course which they actually pursued was, in my opinion, more damaging to British prestige\* abroad than any of these. It was to proclaim publicly its adherence to the third alternative, that is to say universal non intervention, and to put into practice the fourth alternative—unilateral non intervention. It contrived to reconcile these conflicting

\* I should, of course, have been still more bitterly opposed to support being given to the rebels. But such a course would have been at least intelligible and consistent.

policies by turning a blind eye to events which were matters of common knowledge. A council of Great Powers was set up consisting of representatives of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union. The avowed object of this council was to enforce non-intervention all round, but its rules were so framed as to prevent any case of intervention from being formally brought to its notice. In this way, Mussolini and Hitler were allowed with impunity to send considerable armed reinforcements to Franco, and Stalin to send some aeroplanes to aid the Spanish Government. Even when British merchant ships were being sunk by Italian action, only feeble protests were made.

Labour sympathies were almost wholly with the Spanish Government, and, left to itself the Party would probably have advocated a policy of what has since come to be known as 'non-belligerency'—that is to say, active support short of the dispatch of armed forces. But the difficulty was that M. Blum, the head of the 'Popular Front' Government in France, had at the outset declared in favour of non-intervention, and in pursuance of it had refused to supply arms to the Spanish Government. It seemed to most of us that the Socialist Party in Britain could not very well advocate, as an Opposition, what the Socialist Party in France in power was not putting into practice. It is true that we were approached by certain French deputies, who represented to us that M. Blum's policy had been adopted under pressure from the British Government, but the facts they adduced to substantiate this did not appear to us wholly convincing. We therefore confined ourselves in the earlier stages of the struggle to trying to get our Government to carry out in practice its own avowed policy. Later, a more positive line was adopted.

As the Spanish civil war proceeded, Hitler and Mussolini made less and less attempt to cover up their increasing assistance to Franco with the pretence that it was afforded by 'volunteers' and not officially sponsored by their respective Governments. Consequently, it became more and more difficult for the British Government to ignore their activities. The Labour Party in Parliament continually pressed it to bring the real facts before the international Council and to insist on the strict fulfilment by Mussolini of his promise to conform to non-intervention. We were met by taunts from the Conservative benches that we were seeking to embroil our country in war. The Government, it was said, was pursuing the only safe path, and as such it merited the support of all those who had the interests of peace at heart.

In my mind this Conservative argument did not ring true. I did not believe that the Government were in any genuine sense pacifist. I knew that if ever direct British interests were threatened they would not hesitate to defend them, if necessary by armed force. I was convinced that the course they were now pursuing was not calculated to preserve peace for any length of time. On the contrary, by running away from a straight issue, they were bringing British prestige into contempt and encouraging the bully and the aggressor to think that Britain would never fight. I saw war drawing nearer every day to our own country, and it seemed to me that our 'governing classes' were quite blind to what was taking place.

Up to 1936 the Labour Party had given expression to its opposition to the Government's foreign policy by voting against the Service

Estimates \* In doing this we had made it quite clear that we were not in favour of unilateral disarmament, we pointed out, in fact, that we had made many public pronouncements against this policy. We expressly stated that we were willing to provide such defence forces as were required for this country to play its full part in a system of collective security. This was the only way, in our opinion, in which the peace of the world could be maintained and adequate defence provided for Britain itself and its Dominions and dependencies scattered throughout the seven seas.

Inside the House of Commons there was no genuine misunderstanding as to our attitude, because it is a well known principle that 'a vote against an Estimate is not a vote for the abolition of the Service concerned, but is a vote in opposition to the policy of which the Estimate is the expression'. But outside the House of Commons in the country, and, what was still more serious, abroad, we found that our action was being misrepresented. In 1937, therefore, in view of the increasingly grave international situation, the Party decided to pursue in future a different form of procedure less likely to be misunderstood. We moved a 'token' reduction of the vote, and let the main vote go unchallenged by the Party as a whole. Of course, during the whole of this period the Government with its huge majority behind it, had the sole control of the fighting services, and was free to put into effect, both as to their numbers and equipment, any policy on which it was decided.

Not all the members of the Conservative Party, however, gave unquestioning support to the foreign policy of the Government. One or two, like the Duchess of Atholl, definitely sympathized with the Spanish Government. A larger number on other grounds were in favour of standing firm on the principle of all round non intervention in Spain. Mr Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary himself showed unmistakable signs of impatience at Mussolini's continued subterfuges and prevarications. When therefore, in February 1938, Mr Chamberlain proposed to do a fresh deal with the Duce involving further concessions by Britain, Mr Eden made it clear that he could not be a party to any such arrangements at a time when previous commitments by Mussolini remained unhonoured. Mr Chamberlain, however, persisted, and both Mr Eden and Lord Cranborne, the Under-Foreign Secretary, resigned, and Lord Halifax and Mr Butler were appointed to take their places. In the debate which followed in the House of Commons a definite cleavage began to show itself in the ranks of the Government supporters, and the point was made that it was a bad day for this country when a Prime Minister got rid of his Foreign Secretary to placate a foreign statesman.

Meanwhile, from a slightly different angle, Mr Winston Churchill had been, for some time past, a constant critic of the Government. His main theme was the rearmament of Germany. Rising from his place on the front bench below the gangway, he had on several occasions given figures as to what was going on in that country, and challenged the Government to dispute his facts or to take adequate steps to meet them. He enunciated the principle that a beaten foe ought not to be allowed to rearm until, at any rate, it had been reconciled to the settlement. At the time, his figures were disputed, but afterwards it was acknowledged that they were

\* I.e. the money for the fighting services.

actually an underestimate. The Government floated a 'defence loan' and professed to be taking all the steps necessary to put the country into a state of preparedness.

In the summer of 1937, a group of Members of Parliament of all parties accepted an invitation to visit Paris as the guests of members of the French Chamber. I formed one of the group and attended all the principal functions, but I had to hurry back to be present in the House of Commons to take part in some special financial discussions. However, even in the thirty six hours that I was there, I formed impressions of a highly disquieting nature. Men and women belonging to the parties of the Right, with whom I came in contact, spoke openly to me in praise of *Mussolini and his system of Government*, and many of them left no doubt in my mind of their sympathy with Hitler. Of course I had known, for a long time, that somewhat similar sentiments existed among a certain section of my own countrymen and countrywomen, but I gathered that they were far more widely felt in France. Subsequent events fully justified my misgivings.

On March 10, 1938 Hitler invaded and overran Austria. This was the second breach in the Treaty of Versailles, for he had rearmcd the Rhineland some time previously. It was recognized that, one by one, he was implementing the stages of German reconquest that he had set before himself in *Mein Kampf*. Many people thought he would go on at once to attack Czecho-Slovakia, and when he did not do so, they thought the crisis was over. But my friends and I saw clearly that it was only postponed. We therefore once more urged on the Government the need to take a firm stand, and to rally the forces that could still be counted on to resist aggression, before they had one by one been reduced to submission. But the Government did nothing except to make an equivocal declaration with regard to Czecho-Slovakia and to get from Mussolini a promise that he would withdraw his troops from Spain when Franco had been enabled to win the civil war.

On April 27 I spoke in the House of Commons on the Budget and took occasion to deal with the international outlook and to express the view of myself and my Party in the following words:

I say to the Government—and this is a question which is being asked not merely in this House but throughout the country as a whole—where are you going, where are you leading your country and your countrymen at the present time, where are you leading Europe and the world? You are asking from the people of this country unprecedented sacrifices. You are calling for unity. The question is, for what are you asking for this unity and these sacrifices? You say you are out for appeasement and reconciliation. For any real reconciliation in Europe, not only we on these benches and the people for whom we speak, but every man and woman in this country, devoutly pray "

In fact any Government which genuinely sought real reconciliation could, I said, count upon the whole-hearted support of the people of the country.

I then asked what was the actual record of the Government and the policy which it was pursuing. After a brief reference to Ireland, I turned to the continent of Europe and proceeded



"In Germany you are yielding to autarchy and force what you refused to give to justice and democracy, and you are doing this partly because an ignorant section of your followers erroneously believe that under a regime such as that in Germany, their class has a better position than under our own democratic constitution. In Spain, you threw away democracy and freedom when you allowed non intervention to become a farce. With Italy, you are throwing to the wolves two free countries, only bargaining that when the second victim has been killed and dismembered it shall not afterwards be eaten by its aggressors. I am tempted to ask what form your appeasement will take when there are no more weak nations to be flung to the wolves?"

My final words were these

"If you want unity you must stand for the things for which the great heart of our people beats, for liberty, for justice, for democracy, for the rule of law among nations. But you prefer to be leaders of a faction. To us it seems that you are asking sacrifices not for the things for which unity could be obtained, but for the triumph of aggression, for the suppression of democracy, for the planting of the swastika in Central Europe and in the Pyrenees, and of German and Italian guns on the shores of the Mediterranean. If it is for these objects that you look for unity, you will look in vain."

In the summer of 1938 Mr Chamberlain sent Lord Runciman to Czecho-Slovakia to investigate the grievances of the Sudeten Germans, and to report on the possibilities of a peaceful solution. The Labour Party was in touch at the time with both Czech and German workers in that area, and we knew that the situation was a delicate and difficult one. It had been so ever since the Treaty of Versailles had drawn the frontiers in such a way that there was a large German minority inside Czecho-Slovakia. I had myself discussed the matter with Dr Benes when I saw him for the first time in 1923. But our information was that, granted certain concessions in autonomy which Dr Benes was prepared to concede, the German workers preferred to remain as they were, rather than to come into the German Reich and be subject to the iron discipline of Nazi rule. Lord Runciman, however, did not make many contacts with working class opinion, and he reported that he saw little prospect of Czechs and Germans settling down together.

As the year proceeded it became quite evident that Hitler intended to inflame feeling in Sudetenland to a point at which he could represent invasion of Czecho-Slovakia as an act of liberation. The question arose as to what the French Government would do in those circumstances and what would be the attitude of Britain. France was bound by treaty to support the Czechs if they were invaded and Great Britain was honourably committed to support France if she were attacked. How were these obligations to be interpreted if Hitler acted in the way that was expected?

The question was never directly answered for, just when the crash seemed imminent Mr Neville Chamberlain got into an aeroplane and paid a visit to Hitler at Berchtesgaden. This unconventional and unpre-

cedented action called for great courage and initiative, and for those qualities I pay it my tribute of admiration. But courage in a statesman is not enough. He must also show wisdom and judgment. In these Mr Chamberlain was singularly lacking. He took no expert advisers with him, and he allowed Hitler to dominate his mentality. In a word he supped with the devil with a short spoon.

On his return to England with Hitler's terms, he set about discussing them with the French and forcing them down the throats of the Czechs and he was soon off again to Hitler to acquaint him of their acceptance. Hitler was evidently taken aback. Apparently he had no wish for a peaceful settlement and he accordingly raised his terms. Mr Chamberlain to his credit, refused to accept these alterations and returned to England and in a broadcast to the British people stood his ground. Feverish twelfth hour preparations were begun all over the country to get ready for war.

It was at this juncture that on September 28 Parliament was called together. I lunched with Mr Clynes before the sitting began and we agreed on the sombre estimate that there was not one chance in ten that war would be averted. The Labour Parliamentary Executive met and we decided on the line our speakers would take in the forthcoming debate. Then we entered the Chamber, and took our places. Every seat was filled, every passage and corner of the floor and galleries were occupied, Lord Baldwin and the Archbishop of Canterbury looked down upon us from the places allotted to the Peers. My wife was in the strangers gallery. The Prime Minister rose and gave an objective account of what he had done. He concluded by telling us that there was still one chance left of preserving peace. He had asked Mussolini to use his influence with Hitler to suspend hostilities for a few hours and to arrange a further meeting between them which should include the Italian statesman himself and a French Minister. To this request he had so far had no reply.

As he said these words a paper was passed along the front Government bench and handed up to him. He read it and announced that the intervention of Mussolini had been successful, his request had been granted. He then said that he proposed to leave the House immediately to prepare for his journey. The greatest excitement prevailed. Members stood up and waved their order papers and cheered. Distinguished strangers in the galleries broke all the rules and stamped with their feet and banged their umbrellas on the floor. Mr Chamberlain left the Chamber with cries of good wishes on every side.

and a scrap of paper covenanting perpetual peace with Britain, he was hailed as a saviour of the country

I have often been asked since what in my view were Mr Chamberlain's own reactions to the Munich settlement Did he genuinely believe he was securing permanent peace? Or was he merely buying time for rearmament? My answer is that he approached the whole question from the point of view of a business man He, as the head of one big firm, the British Empire, was out to do a deal with the head of another powerful firm, the German Reich As he saw it, it was regrettable, but not important, if, in arriving at a settlement, a lesser firm like Czecho-Slovakia went to the wall Gentlemen's agreements between big business men were generally kept, particularly when they were to the advantage of both parties For that reason Hitler would probably keep his word, but if he failed to do so, he had been at least induced to allow his rival's firm a period of grace in which to prepare for the ensuing conflict

The Munich settlement divided the country into two camps and the cleavage went through the ranks of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons Members of the smaller section, who opposed it, drew nearer to us in their foreign outlook Some of them shared our view that the right time to have conciliated Germany was when she was being governed by moderate statesmen, and that the failure of Britain and France to take this course was largely responsible for the rise of Hitler to power. Others thought that the restrictions on Germany should throughout have been more rigidly applied But we were all agreed that to try to appease Hitler *now* by letting him take what he wanted, a piece at a time, was not only the surest step towards war, but would deprive us, when it came, of moral and strategic support and leave us to fight the battle alone. Opposed to us was the great majority of the Conservative Party who gave unqualified support to Mr Chamberlain's action

The spring of 1939 saw the German Army in Prague, contrary to the explicit promises of Hitler at Munich I think Mr. Chamberlain realized then that he had been fooled, but it did not change his view that the course he had adopted had presented at the time the only hope of keeping the country out of war Nevertheless, he was not prepared to repeat the same tactics with regard to Poland, which was the next victim marked out for attack Accordingly, with the support of the Labour Opposition, and with the agreement of the French Government, he made an explicit statement that in the event of unprovoked aggression on Poland, Britain and France would go immediately to her aid It was only after taking this irrevocable step that he made serious attempts to woo the Soviet Union, whose Government he had consistently cold-shouldered during his whole term of office It is perhaps not altogether surprising that this twelfth-hour courtship failed of its purpose

Meanwhile the foreign situation was reflected in domestic policy The Government introduced into Parliament a Conscription Bill and a Defence Budget In view of the imminence of war, I came to the conclusion that I could not honestly oppose either, and that to abstain would be merely shirking responsibility I therefore agreed with the view of the majority of the Labour Party and voted in favour of both measures But on the former, I actively supported provisions to safeguard the position of conscientious objectors, and on the latter I propounded a scheme for an

annual tax on wealth as a counterpart to the demands being made on human life

My wife had accepted an invitation to go to Geneva in the middle of August to open an International House for the World Woman's Party, and I had arranged to accompany her. But, as the day drew near and the clouds on the horizon became ever more threatening, we discussed together whether it would be right for us to be absent from the country at this critical moment. I consulted Arthur Greenwood, who was then acting as Leader of the Opposition during the temporary indisposition of Clem Attlee, and at his suggestion rang him up on the night before our departure. He then told me that it was unlikely that war would break out within a week, and as our places for the return journey in an aeroplane were booked for August 23 we decided to carry through the engagement. The ceremony was a brilliant one and it was a heartening experience to meet women from all over the world, on this, the last opportunity that we were likely to have for several years to come. The day after we got back, the treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union was announced, and the stage was set for the grave events which everyone knew were not likely now to be long delayed.

When Parliament met a few days later the German invasion of Poland had already begun. The Prime Minister made a statement which gave the impression of hesitancy in fulfilling the pledge of Britain and France to go to the immediate aid of Poland. But the House of Commons was not prepared to tolerate delay, still less anything in the nature of another 'Munich' settlement. Its temper was shown when Arthur Greenwood, who was sitting next to me on the Front Opposition Bench, rose and said that the honour of the country demanded immediate action. "Speak for England," cried out one of the Conservative Members, supporting his protest. The House decided to meet in the morning of the following day, Sunday, September 3. But before the actual hour came for the sitting to begin, Mr Chamberlain in a broadcast to the nation announced that an ultimatum had been sent to Hitler to expire that morning at eleven o'clock. Big Ben then struck, and we knew that we were at war with Germany.

Almost immediately there was an air-raid alarm and everyone went down into the shelter in the basement of the House of Commons. It seemed, at the time, a dramatic opening of the struggle, but in fact it was only due to the presence several miles away of an unidentified aeroplane\*. The 'All Clear' signal was soon given. We then met and carried through rapidly a number of emergency measures. In the afternoon I rang up my wife, who was at our country home. I found her reactions identical with my own. Both of us though life long pacifists detesting war and its hideous concomitants and realizing the immensity of the struggle on which the country was embarking, were conscious of a sense of profound relief. For we knew in our hearts that there were things worse even than war, and that one of these would have been for our country to break its plighted word and betray a sister nation which had trusted to its fulfilment.

\* It was not till many months afterwards that bombs were actually dropped on the land of the British Isles and it was later still before the Chamber of the House of Commons was itself destroyed.

Nevertheless, owing to geography, the only help that could be given to the Poles was indirect, and a few weeks sufficed for the Germans to overrun their country. There followed, during the winter months of 1939-40, the period of what was called the 'phony' war, when there was little actual fighting except on the sea. My own constituents were, I think, the first civilians to come under fire. Among them were the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and a local woman doctor, both had their houses penetrated by bullets which had been aimed at German aeroplanes flying low over the Firth of Forth to attack Rosyth. But little else took place on land, and people began to ask when the war was really going to begin.

It was then that Mr Chamberlain gave utterance to a remark which, unfortunately for him, will go down to history. He declared that Hitler had 'missed the bus' and that a victory for the Allies was now assured. Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when events happened with startling rapidity. Hitler seized Denmark and Norway, and proceeded to strike lightning blows at Holland, Belgium, and France. That sealed Mr Chamberlain's fate as Prime Minister. He found himself faced with substantial defection in the ranks of his own Party. He made an attempt to reconstruct his Government by including members of other parties. But Labour refused, as it had done before at the outbreak of war, to serve under him, and he was compelled to yield his place to Mr Winston Churchill. A Coalition Government was formed in which Labour's Parliamentary leaders occupied important positions.

It so happened that during these fateful days in May 1940 the annual conference of the Labour Party was meeting at Bournemouth, and endorsement of the decision to support the new Government and to serve under Churchill was sought and obtained. On my way there I turned over in my mind the likely course of events as it affected myself and my friends in the Labour Party. I realized that while the choice of the personnel of the Government was a matter for the Prime Minister, one very important position lay outside his province, and was open for us to fill. That was the post of spokesman for the non-official members of the House of Commons.

In normal times of Party Government the Leader of the Opposition has certain well defined functions to perform. He is the head of the 'Shadow Cabinet'. He decides the line that the Opposition Party will take on all matters of major importance. He selects the subjects for the twenty 'supply' days each session when the administrative acts of the Ministry are called in question. It rests with him to voice the views of private members of all parties in contradistinction to that of the Government. Naturally he exercises these functions 'constitutionally', that is to say, he acts in accordance with what he believes to be the general wish of his Party or of the House. To enable him to perform these duties efficiently and to give his whole time to the job, he is provided with a special room of his own in immediate proximity to the Chamber, and is even given a salary from public funds.

In the peculiar circumstances of an All Party Government there would, I saw, be no Opposition in the technical sense but many of the functions of the Leader of the Opposition would still have to be performed. In particular, someone would regularly have to put the formal question regarding future business, and I foresaw that the man who asked

that question on the first sitting day after Parliament reassembled would continue to ask it thereafter, and would by *tacit consent* be accepted to fill the post. Moreover, as the composition of the Government would still be mainly Conservative with a Conservative Prime Minister at its head, it seemed only reasonable that it should be a Labour man who should speak for the rest of the House.

I accordingly pressed the matter on the attention of the members of the Parliamentary Labour Party who were at Bournemouth, and at my suggestion Lees-Smith was selected. He proceeded at once to London, discussed matters with the Speaker, and on Whit Monday, when the House met, occupied the central seat on the Opposition Front Bench facing the Prime Minister and asked the business question. From that time onwards he continued to act in this capacity. But it was agreed that, in the special circumstances, the salary attaching to the position of Leader of the Opposition should be in abeyance.

Unofficially, I became his deputy and confidant. He and I shared the view that, in the altered circumstances, a new technique was required for the Labour Party in its dealings with the Government. Whereas, as a Party in opposition, it could express its disapproval only *after the event* by criticism and a hostile vote, now, as a Party supporting the Government, it had the right to exert pressure, *before the event* and to have its views respected and, within certain limits, implemented by action.

In pursuance of this policy, I took an active part on behalf of my Party in negotiating with the Government for the removal of the house hold means test, and I further secured substantial alterations in the Purchase Tax and War Damage Bill. At the same time, I had been appointed Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, and in that capacity I had the duty of examining the permanent heads of all the Ministries as to their administration of their offices during the preceding year. In the exercise of these two functions I obtained an insight into the inner working of the Parliamentary machine such as I had never had before, not even when I was myself a member of the Government.

In November 1941, to my great grief, my friend and leader, Bertie Lees-Smith, fell a victim to the after-effects of influenza, and his place as chairman of the Party became vacant. In the selection of his successor, my colleagues of the Parliamentary Labour Party did me the honour of choosing me, unanimously, exhibiting thereby a mark of their confidence which I highly appreciated. This meant that I presided at all meetings of the Party in the House and that I became the virtual Leader of the Opposition, sitting opposite the Prime Minister in the Chamber and following him in debate. I continued to hold this position until Arthur Greenwood left the Cabinet, when he automatically\* resumed it. The Party then created the office of Vice-Chairman and elected me to fill it. Shortly after this I was appointed by Royal Warrant to be a trustee of the National Library of Scotland.

In the greater world, the formation of the Coalition Government had

\* Before the formation of the Coalition, Clement Attlee as leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, presided at its meetings and was Leader of the Opposition in the House. Arthur Greenwood was deputy leader. When they went into the War Cabinet, they did not vacate these Party offices, but their functions were performed by Lees Smith and myself.

synchronized with an immense extension of the war in which the ruthless might of the German machine was exhibited to the uttermost Dutch and Belgian cities were pounded to dust, and their armies in the field annihilated Paris was taken and Pétain signed an armistice with Hitler The British Expeditionary Force, by a miracle of courage and individual resource, was evacuated from Dunkirk, but its equipment was left behind Britain and her Commonwealth remained alone and almost unarmed Churchill expressed the obstinate determination of the British people magnificently, but strangely enough, in the House of Commons, the principal cheers for him came from the Labour benches Many of the Tories could not forget that he had replaced their leader, Mr Chamberlain, in the Premiership Then the 'Battle of Britain' began, and bombs rained down on London and the great provincial cities Even country districts were attacked, and my own garden in Surrey received a 'Molotov bread basket'

I watched with ever-growing admiration the response of the British people to the imminent peril of death or injury by enemy action There was little sign of fear and none of panic There was even a sense of exultation that we, the civilians were for once in the front line with our soldiers, sailors, and airmen One of my secretaries was up all one night with a bomb in her tiny garden, the windows of her house shattered and debris lying all about She arrived at my office next morning, smartly dressed, to do her day's work Another day she came, pale but not agitated, and asked if she might sit quietly for a few minutes before starting, she told me how, as she was walking on her way, a bomb had fallen on an omnibus shortly in front of her and she had seen the dead and wounded carried out from its remains Such stories were common in those days and will remain the heritage of the race!

Since then, the tide of battle has ebbed and flowed By her wanton invasion of Russia in June 1941, Germany brought us a new ally who has gallantly held her own, and who has linked her fate with ours in a treaty covering both the war and the reconstruction Again, as a result of the treacherous attack by Japan in the following December, the United States and many other countries of North and South America, as well as China, have become our partners in the common struggle They too will help us to build the new world With such comrades who can doubt the certainty of ultimate victory?

Nevertheless no one can forecast the day or the manner of the end It can come only with the complete defeat of Hitler and the overthrow of the entire Nazi regime But unless the whole of Central Europe is to disintegrate into chaos, some stable Government in Germany will have to be called into being, with which peace can be made and which can be charged with the German side of giving effect to it Such a peace must not be based on emotion, but on a sober sense of reality and a wise regard for the future It must secure to Germans, in common with men of other races, an adequately full life and a legitimate outlet for the use of their creative faculties in the service of their fellows But at the same time it must place outside their reach the power, if ever tempted by some new Hitler they should have the will, to plunge humanity into another bath of blood

With the end of the war and the establishment of peace the world will

enter on a new era Gone will be the old landmarks of physical and economic limitation Man today can see and hear across great distances He can ride the clouds His capacity to produce has become almost unlimited No physical obstacle stands in the way of securing to every member of the human family a complete and satisfying life Will he elect to enter into his kingdom? If so, he must lay aside his prejudice and greed and his lust of domination, and co-operate with his fellows in the furtherance of the common weal

## CHAPTER XXI

### MY PHILOSOPHY

If I have faltered more or less  
In my great task of happiness  
If I have moved among my race  
And shown no glorious morning face  
If beams from happy human eyes  
Have moved me not if morning skies  
Books and my food and summer rain  
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain  
Lord thy most pointed pleasure take  
And stab my spirit broad awake  
Or Lord if too obdurate I  
Choose thou before that spirit die  
A piercing pain a killing sin  
And to my dead heart run them in!

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Enlargement of personality—Integration of self—Control of thoughts—Joy and sorrow—Failure—The world around us—Barriers of sex class race and age—Sex characteristics—A difference of approach—Class complexes—International strife—Young and old—The greater life—Rigid principles—The natural law—Karma and Forgiveness of sin—Light on the path

IF I were asked to sum up in a single phrase the main objective of individual life, I would express it as the enlargement of personality By this I do not mean that the individual should deliberately concentrate his energies on his own expansion He should open out naturally almost unconsciously in response to the demands made upon him Then all the forces of life will play upon his personality, all experience all activity all human relationship all spiritual aspiration will conspire to bring about *his growth* \*

Each one of us is a composite fragment of the Great Life Within ourselves are diverse and divergent passions unexplored instincts latent powers and strange inhibitions Some of these are part of our ancestral heritage, some are derived from our environment in early and forgotten childhood others are the result of more recent and remembered experiences It should surely be part of our education to learn to harmonize

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\* In the little book *Light on the Path* to which reference has already been made in Chapter XII MC writes Grow as the flower grows unconsciously but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air So must you press forward to open your soul to the Eternal But it must be the Eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty not desire for growth For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature



these warring elements within ourselves and to integrate our personality. This is no easy task. But the rudiments of it could be taught to children in simple language and in after years it should be continuously striven after. For only so can we present a single front to the external world and conduct ourselves consistently in reponse to the stimulus of outside events.

We are frequently puzzled to account for our thoughts which come to us we know not whence, and may lead us we know not whither. We cannot by our will altogether control them and we should probably be the poorer if we could. For many of them are noble and sublime and extend the horizons of our mental and spiritual vision. But some are clearly recognizable as sordid and ugly while others appear to be mere will o' the wisps which dance before us and would lead us if we followed them into a morass of unedifying indecision. What is within our power is to select those thoughts which we will harbour and to refuse admittance to the rest. This is what all the great religious teachers have impressed upon us bidding us remember that only out of right thought can right action spring. Many of our failures today originate in our disregard of this fundamental truth.

It is customary for us to denote experiences which give us pleasure as good and those which cause us pain as ill. Sometimes we are even told to regard the latter as punishment for our misdeeds. But I venture to call in question this classification. All of them are our teachers from whom we have much to learn and we cannot evaluate the benefit they confer upon us by the extent of the pleasure we derive from them at the time. Joy is indulgent like the sunshine in the spring and enriches us by its warmth and encouragement. Sorrow is stern like the frost in winter it breaks up our soil and prepares us for new birth. Looking over my life I realize how much poorer I should be if my periods of suffering and disappointment had not occurred.

Nevertheless I hold with Robert Louis Stevenson whose challenging words I have quoted at the head of this chapter that it is one of our imperative tasks to cultivate that gentle equipoise of being which we call happiness. We owe this not only to ourselves but to all those with whom we come in contact for happiness engenders happiness. The rhythm of life the contemplation of beauty the interplay of human relationships the comprehension of spiritual truth—all these should provide us with ample source of rejoicing and satisfaction. Then if grief comes it will find us with a reserve of strength and serenity to enable us to last out the period of storm and strife.

Of all the many things which cause us distress the hardest to meet and overcome are those which spring not from external mischance but from our own failure. There is something to me almost unbearable in the thought that the record on the scroll of life once written can never be expunged. I have found in such cases only one means of escape from despondency. That is to build up out of failure a greater good. It is useless to imagine that we can evade the consequences of our mistakes. But we may still be the gunners if we derive from them a wider comprehension of ourselves of others and of the outside world and from such comprehension fruitful action will spring.

Our earliest experiences inform us that we do not exist in the world alone, and, as we grow up, we are astounded to find how closely other dwellers in it resemble ourselves. They are moved by similar instincts and passions, they think similar thoughts, they even cherish similar aspirations. When therefore daily life brings us in contact with our fellows, we begin first shyly, and then with growing confidence, to mingle our being with theirs and thereby unconsciously to enlarge our own personality. There are an infinite variety of ways in which this comes about, and no two human beings have identical experiences. Love, marriage, parenthood, friendship, association in work and play, are common opportunities which are presented to the great majority of mankind, and of which they take advantage in differing degrees.

It remains true, however, that there are many barriers which tend to segregate human beings into separate and conflicting camps. The mutual attractiveness of men and women for one another is tinged with fear, and even with a degree of hostility. Divergent class interests create jealousy and suspicion. Racial antipathy engenders hatreds that result in war. The impatient enthusiasm of youth finds its progress blocked by the disillusionment of age. Differing religious allegiances breed in the hearts of men exclusiveness and intolerance. Yet I venture to assert that, unless an individual can transcend the limits of sex, class, race, age and creed, his personality remains of necessity to that extent incomplete.

It has been part of my work in life to help to break down some of these barriers and thereby to set free the spirit of man. It has been my privilege in so doing to enter into the lives and activities of others who have been working with me for the same ends. In that way I have experienced the joy of losing some of my separateness and of becoming a living part of a greater organic whole. Looking back I am conscious that I could never have made these opportunities for myself on my own initiative, and therefore the debt that I owe to those who provided the necessary outside stimulus is incalculable. Percy Alden first broke down for me the barriers of class. Keir Hardie inspired me with the ideals of his rich and generous personality. Christabel Pankhurst imparted to me her faith in the potentialities of a free and awakened womanhood. But above all it has been my wife who has opened for me the windows of the spirit and let in the light and air of the greater life to quicken and refresh my being.

It is part of the fascination of life that within the framework of similarity there exists infinite variety. The question arises as to the extent to which the characteristics of an individual are dependent on the group or category to which he belongs. Are there, for instance, inherent racial differences? Is there a class psychology? Does the distinction of sex extend beyond the physical into the mental and moral realms? Mixing as I have done at various times in my life in intimate association with all sorts and conditions of men and women, I have had special opportunities of observation of these matters, and I will set down the conclusions which I have reached as the result of my experience.

I do not believe that sex differentiation extends to the mental sphere. Men and women, as I have found them, appear to me equally capable of abstract reasoning and of applying it if they choose to concrete cases. The exercise of this faculty, however, is greatly affected by environment and education, and there was, until recently a wide difference in the

treatment of the sexes in these respects. It is not surprising therefore if the casual observer, contrasting the performance of the highly trained man with that of the less trained woman, has imagined an inherent difference between the sexes which in fact does not exist. This misconception is probably disappearing today in view of the closer approximation of the training of boys and girls.

I do not hold the same view with regard to emotional reaction. Though, in this sphere also, upbringing plays an important part, it seems to me unquestionable that, after full allowance has been made for this factor, a residual difference does exist which can only be attributed to sex. That does not mean, of course, that all women are more emotional than all men, which is demonstrably false. It means simply that the emotions of the average woman give a more sensitive response than those of the average man. The separate judgments of the two sexes are therefore a valuable check on one another.

But this is by no means the end of the matter. The more profound question still remains to be answered as to whether men and women approach life from the same angle and with the same objective. I am inclined to think that they do not. Of course they have in common the desire for the satisfaction of their immediate personal needs—physical, mental, emotional, and creative—in all their varying forms. But whereas men tend to look upon life as an adventure to be lived at the time for its own sake, women tend to regard it as a means to an end which finds its highest expression in the concern for the future of the race. This difference of approach, which may well be physiological\* in its origin, inclines women to be more personal and subjective than men and to distrust the application of logic to individual life. It makes it more and not less important that their viewpoint shall be represented equally with that of men in the counsels of the nation.

When we pass from sex to class we are confronted with an entirely different problem. For whereas sex is a law of nature, class is man-made, and whereas human beings cannot change their sex they can and frequently do change their class. As I have known it in western Europe during my lifetime, class has been mainly† a matter of length of purse. It is that which has determined the character and duration of a man's training, his style of living, his opportunities for recreation and culture, and whether his main job in life shall be to give orders or to obey them.

The outward consequences of the division into classes are twofold. First, there is the denial to a large section of the population of the opportunities of enjoying the material heritage which the genius and labour of past ages have built up for succeeding generations. The second is in the limitation which is imposed thereby on the community in selecting the best men and women for difficult and responsible posts of authority and

\* It is interesting to observe that among the bees and the ants where a female polity prevails, the comforts, and even the lives of the existing generation seem frequently to be sacrificed to the need of securing the well being of the generation that is yet to be.

† At other times and places, class has had a racial, hereditary or cultural basis, and some traces of these distinctions continue to exist in our society today, but they are for practical purposes, subordinated to the money consideration.

control These are grave evils and a society which tolerates them stands in my opinion self condemned But there is also a more subtle but no less pernicious consequence namely that in the realm of mind

I have already noted (in Chapter II) the prevalence at Eton of a superiority complex and to a lesser degree this appertains to the whole of what is known as the governing class in our society This frame of mind has its better side It creates a sense of assurance and a freedom from pettiness It promotes loyalty and courage In fine personalities it engenders courtesy and generosity and compels a behaviour which is best described by the French phrase *noblesse oblige* But at the same time it inculcates class exclusiveness and thereby limits sympathy and in baser types it encourages an indolent tolerance of wrong and an obstinate and selfish resistance to change which unless overcome may lead to national decline or internal revolution

The corresponding inferiority complex which tends to be fostered in the governed class arises from a sense of frustration and is almost wholly bad in its effects These differ in different individuals In some it induces a lack of self confidence and inclines them to accept unquestioningly a more subordinate position than that to which their capacities would entitle them Others it makes bitter and aggressive They are deeply resentful when they find their way to advancement barred by men and women who with no better brains than themselves and it may be with less industry obtain preferential treatment due to parental wealth and influence Their bitterness is increased when these persons being placed in authority over them exhibit incompetence and sloth and even show disdain for their subordinates

Of course not every one is affected equally if at all by these class divisions Scientists doctors technicians highly skilled mechanics and many other men and women in humbler walks of life find in their work and daily duties ample scope for their creative faculties which sets them free from artificial inhibitions The same detachment from conventional social standards exists in seats of learning and research with a result which those who have been privileged to participate in them cannot fail to have appreciated

Some persons at all periods in the history of the world have deliberately discarded the prerogatives of their privileged position Some again starting from the other end of the social scale have been able by their exceptional ability aided perhaps by good fortune to rise out of the class in which they were born Others eschewing separation from their fellows have become their leaders and have essayed the task of raising the status of their class as a whole such high purpose if carried through sincerely and courageously builds up character and enlarges personality Unfortunately there are a number of such men and women in our society to day and I am privileged to count many among them as my intimate friends

The evils that arise from racial disunity need no emphasizing in the midst of the most horrible war the world has ever known It seems almost incredible that we should be engaged in this fratricidal strife when for the first time in history control of economic resources is such that a

complete life could be secured for everyone whether the colour of his skin be white, yellow, brown or black. What is it that afflicts nations, so that instead of pooling their knowledge and industry for the common good, they have elected to destroy one another and the very structure of civilization they have built up? When this war is over we must find a more radical cure for this disease than mere punishment of the guilty parties. There must be an all round renunciation of the claim to dominate and exploit other peoples, and a willingness to make any sacrifice to secure the universal observance of this rule of conduct. Those who in their own lives have already ceased to recognize the barriers which separate races from one another will have a special part to play in helping to bring this new conception into being.

It may seem trivial to turn from these great causes of human dissensions to the transitory misunderstandings between young and old, but I cannot accept that view. For the rebuffs of childhood and adolescence leave scars, which disfigure the personality in after life. The young have the excuse of their inexperience if they fail to appreciate the old, but the old ought to be able to remember their own youth, and respect the personality of the young. They will find their own personality greatly enriched thereby. No less a person than Lenin, whose life was crowded with public activity, regarded his day as incomplete unless it had provided him with some leisure in which to play with a child. Fortunately there are today an increasing number of those who see in differences of age no obstacle to free interchange of thought and experience.

Countless fragments of the Great Life do not belong to the human family. There are the higher animals whose frame resembles our own. There are the birds who share our aesthetic joys. There are the wise insects whose civilizations were built up long before human history began. There are the great trees and the flowers, the glory of whose apparel far outstrips our highest conscious effort. It is an abiding joy to me to be able to claim kinship with all of these, and even with the majestic stars who sweep through their courses in the unfathomed depths of space. Their life and ours, taken together, constitute the whole design of the Universe, like the colours of the rainbow which in combination produce white light.

I often think of the words written by Matthew Arnold\* regarding Sophocles—he saw life steadily and saw it whole—and set them before me as an ideal. For I refuse to be driven through life in blinkers and insist upon facing facts, even when they are most disagreeable, and even when they conflict with my previous convictions. I have found by experience that only in this way is the mind receptive to new truth. It is sometimes said that a man of no principles is a danger to himself and society, and so he is. But an even greater danger may be the man whose principles are

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\* In a *Sermon to the Friends*.

so rigid that he refuses to learn from the logic of events. For our reactions of thought and conduct have to be related to the world around us as it is, and not as it might be if it were constructed according to our imagination.

Many of the facts that we meet with are hard to comprehend and still harder to accept. Sin and suffering and death, cruelty and oppression, the constant triumph of wrong over right have puzzled our forefathers and will continue to puzzle us and succeeding generations. I have myself devoted much thought to the law that ordains that all life must live upon life. To this law we, in common with others, are ourselves subject. If then we believe, as I do, that all life is part of the Great Life and that that Life is the Life of God, then not merely on sacramental occasions but whenever we eat or drink or even breathe we are partaking of the body and blood of God. This is indeed a great mystery which we must accept in all reverence. We need have no scruple in enjoying our food, because that enjoyment too is part of the great law. But we must eat with the intention of sustaining and strengthening our bodies so as to fit them for the high tasks they have to fulfil, otherwise, if we eat and drink in a way that saps their vitality and lessens their efficiency, we not only do wrong to ourselves but are guilty of blasphemy itself.

From time to time we find ourselves shocked by the working out of the natural law. Inevitably we contrast its ruthlessness and the ever recurring waste and frustration of life\* with our own heart's desire for universal happiness and harmony. We seem, as it were, to be placed on the horns of a dilemma. Dare we arrogate to ourselves the right to pass moral judgment on the great law itself and declare it to be wrong and wicked? If not, are we prepared to admit that our pity for the afflicted and the dying, our solicitude for the weak, our care for the aged are misplaced?†

The truth seems to me to be that the great laws of life cannot be judged by the same standards as the laws of human conduct. Even among men the duty of two individuals may be widely different, and what is right for the macrocosm is by no means necessarily right for the microcosm. Or, to put the matter in biblical language 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the Lord, nor are my ways your ways'. This is a hard saying, but we have to remember that God is revealed to us, not only in the life of the Universe around and in the teachings that have been handed down to us, but also in the recesses of our own hearts. It is only in a combination of ~~all these methods of approach~~ that we can hope to comprehend something of His Being.

According to the wisdom of the East, cause and consequence form the basis of the whole spiritual and natural world and Karma is the working

Cf. Tennyson in *Ex Memoriam*

Are God and Nature then at strife  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life

† It would appear to be on some such philosophic reasoning that the whole Nazi heresy rests. This heresy inculcates a reversion to the ethical standards of a primitive creation which human society has consciously discarded and outgrown.

out of this fundamental law in the infinite vicissitudes of life. The central doctrine of the Christian faith is the Forgiveness of sins. To many it seems that these two doctrines are mutually exclusive and that they have to make their choice between them. But I do not see it in that way, for I do not regard Karma as punishment, nor Forgiveness of sins as an escape from consequences.

When the body is subjected to an accident or falls a prey to disease, it cannot resume its full functions until it has been healed. The healing will be done by the life forces within the body itself which are awakened by the sensation of pain, but they can be helped by the conscious attitude of the patient and by the ministrations of the doctor. Whether the cure be painful or otherwise is a matter of comparative unimportance, what is essential is that it shall begin before the trouble has become chronic and that the restoration to health shall be complete.

It is precisely the same with maladies of the spirit whose symptoms are what are called sin. They ravage the personality, and reduce its powers to perform its proper functions. But within are the healing forces which Karma stimulates into action. Repentance is the spiritual prerequisite of the co-operation of the patient in his own redemption, and the Forgiveness of sin assures to him the loving kindness that lies behind the treatment to which he will be subjected.

How much further can we go? Can we enter into conscious union with the Great Spirit who founded the laws of life, who fashioned the wild rose, who taught the stars their courses, and who, with magnificent daring, gave man free will and in so doing permitted him to flout the divine harmony? Humbly we sit at the feet of the great teachers whose vision has extended so far beyond our own as to seem different, not merely in degree, but in kind. They are the prototypes of the race to whose experience we may aspire in the future to attain. But here and now to each one of us is accorded a special individual relationship with the Central Life. We are conscious of a guidance which shapes our ends and lights our path. One day a greater light will be given to us, and in anticipation of that day we trim the lamps of our hearts so that, when it comes, it may irradiate our lives.

THE END

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